TRINITY CONTINUUM

# PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

THE PSI ORDERS SOURCEBOOK
FOR TRINITY CONTINUUM: ÆON

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# INTERLOCKING PIECES

"Recording confirmed, this is Agent Mark Grandstaff, Mercury Initiative, speaking with Kevin Solomon. Tekne, right?"

The Æon agent's minicomp on the table dictated everything he said. He paced behind the table, a tic he'd never been able to shake, as a window on the screen followed him via camera feed. He hated the way his fading hairline looked on camera, and how his glasses made his pale, round face look even rounder. Across from him sat a tall man with fair skin, black hair, thick AR glasses, and an amused smile. The minicomp window with his camera feed displayed a cartoon smiley face instead.

"You're not in any trouble, Mr. Solomon," Mark said when he noticed the substitution. "The anonymous tip that got us there before the FSA authorities ensured that. But multiple psi orders suddenly converged on a small Appalachian city and some folks want to know why."

The Orgotek engineer watched him for a moment. He visibly relaxed and the appropriate camera feed replaced the smiley face.

"So, someone hired Tekne to send me out and look at this power grid and track down some weird fluctuations. About an hour and change south of Pittsburgh, this old college town that's basically a huge truck stop between arcologies. I started to look at the older areas..."

• • •

Kevin stepped from his rented truck wearing a generic maintenance worker's uniform. The hotel ahead was six stories of red brick under a light dusting of grit either kicked up from the road or brought down by polluted rain diverted from surrounding arcologies. Likely both. A poster clashing with the pre-War architecture reminded passersby to be 'grateful' for the district board and local corp Crutchfield Energy, who rebuilt the area after the War.

Kevin's glasses showed him an overlay of the local power grid, a mostly orderly outline of cables above and below ground. As he approached the building, he saw a concentration of underground infrastructure consistent with the football stadium that had stood on this spot until the late Aberrant War. As he got closer, something felt 'off' to his noetic senses.

He reconfigured his digital ID's display to show the appropriate forged credentials as he located a surviving pre-War junction box connected to that underground network. His equipment and abilities told him what he suspected — those power lines were active and pulling in as much power as the surrounding city blocks combined. He closed his eyes, focused, saw the 'shape' of the system, and gasped.

"Hey."

Kevin turned to face the voice, fake ID in hand, only to be confronted with a security guard holding an old slug-thrower hand cannon.

• • •

"Ms. Cheung—"

"Fu Lin is fine, Agent Grandstaff."

The Ministry agent was predictably polite, though Mark suspected she'd insisted on wearing her full uniform for intimidation factor rather than a sense of propriety.

"Ms. Cheung," he stressed, letting exasperation creep into his voice. "Does the ONS often send operatives to random American hotels?"

"Only when a representative of that hotel comes to China to negotiate with a travel agency, and we suspect," she paused, "ulterior motives."

• • •

Dressed like a typical tourist, Fu Lin pretended to review a brochure on her tablet as she lounged on a couch in the lobby. She glanced up at movement in the edge of her field of vision. A security guard and a maintenance worker crossed the lobby, but what quirk of instinct caused her to even notice?

She saw it in their body language. They walked so nobody could see the guard's hidden gun, pointed at the other man. The lightest touch across the worker's surface thoughts — who in truth was from Orgotek — told her the tone of their interaction. She mentally informed him everything would be okay, prompting a glance from him. She then discreetly used her tablet to send a handful of emergency messages to local contacts, as well as one that would indirectly reach Æon.

• • •

"That's right, Agent Grandstaff, I was infiltrating the Aberrant cult," the bronze-skinned, short-haired interviewee said. "One of Norça's business partners did or said something to provoke a more thorough background check. The specifics are above my pay grade," he said with a dismissive wave.

"I'm sure they are, mister..." Agent Grandstaff checked his notes and raised an eyebrow as if to say 'really?' "...Fred Smith."

'Fred' shrugged.

• • •

'Fred,' wearing a hotel employee uniform over his other disguise of pale skin, curly brown hair, and thick build, discreetly followed the guard and his captive into the basement. He sensed the biotech hidden under the maintenance uniform and took this as a sign an intervention was coming. The guard muttered something into a comm unit and took the man into a room on what he clearly intended to be a one-way trip. The biokinetic made sure the hallway was clear before he grew an electrical organ into his forearm and snuck into the room behind them.

• • •

"Does anyone from ISRA ever 'just happen' to be anywhere, Ms. Dye?"

"Please, call me Leona," the ochre-skinned woman said as she relaxed in her seat with a knowing gleam in her eyes. A paper cup of steaming tea sat in front of her. "You won't, but I want to give you permission all the same."

Agent Grandstaff sighed.

"Someone wrote a letter to the Old Man, hoping he could tell her what happened to her son," Leona explained as she sipped her tea. "He took an interest, and I volunteered to look into it for him."

"Pardon my tone, but why would Otha-*freaking*-Herzog take an interest in a random letter sent to him by a random woman?"

"First, consider who you're talking about. Second, think about what we found under that hotel. Then ask yourself that question again." Leona glanced at the tablet sitting next to Mark's biocomp. It was off, but he remembered all too well the last picture he'd viewed on it.

• • •

Leona lounged on the patio outside the hospital cafeteria a couple of blocks away from the hotel. A cup of thoroughly mediocre tea cooled on the table next to a still-wrapped sandwich. As soon as she'd gotten outside, a sensation ran through her ruining her appetite. She watched the hotel with binoculars to help her focus, only to find her senses getting bogged down by something unpleasant. It was like she'd pushed through brush just to hit a thick, occupied cobweb.

The ground rumbled and she reached over to send the message she'd prepared on her minicomp. If she had any doubts as to whether the time had come, the side of the hotel exploding outward quashed them. People rushed out of the building as an Aberrant resembling a red alien octopus the size of a tank clambered out on uneven tentacles. It was practically a giant fanged maw on legs. Among the panicked crowd, Leona spotted the tanned Chinese woman in the 'I Heart New New York' t-shirt, just like in her vision.

Leona thought at her as hard as she could. The woman looked up, and across the distance their eyes met.

*Contact*.

• • •

"So, in my defense, there was a 50-50 chance as to whether shutting down the weird equipment in the basement would kill the Aberrant or wake it up," Kevin explained to the agent. "I'm still not sure if they were just waiting for it to wake up on its own, or whatever. But apparently, it'd been down there, mutating, since the early 60's."

"And where was 'Fred' during all this?"

• • •

Kevin fled up the stairs before the whole thing collapsed on him. His focus was divided by explaining what happened to the telepath who was still in his head. Then the conversation became a conference call — one with pictures, no less!

Meanwhile, up ahead, the biokinetic held off the cult members who'd stayed to fight. His arms had split into an array of tentacles, each one tipped with a rudimentary but functioning bio-laser, which was even more disturbing than Kevin could have anticipated. On a whim he described the man and his current position to Fu Lin and Leona, and moments later welcomed 'Fred' into the psychic group chat.

• • •

"Sergeant Palmer, you're saying you were already on your way when the Aberrant emerged?"

"That's right," the Fifth Legion soldier, a ginger-haired white woman, confirmed. "We'd gotten a tip from a clear earlier in the day and decided to take it seriously, and then she sent us another message confirming the worst."

• • •

The monster waded through the streets, literally sizzling with Quantum Flux , destroying buildings and vehicles with tentacles and some sort of energy breath. It had been rampaging for several minutes after escaping the confines of the hotel. Either it was no longer capable of human reason or was possessed of such rage there was no functional difference. The

ragtag band of psions had kept tabs on it, but none of them were well-armed enough to pierce its crimson hide. Even its own cultists had fled the destruction by this point.

The few civilians still on the scene, either blocked by wreckage or held by curiosity, actually cheered when the first RPG came screaming down the street to explode against the creature. Their enthusiasm wavered when they recognized a Legionnaire taking to the sky under her own power, levitating vehicles to fling them at the Aberrant. This far from the Blight, the Legions meant chaos, not safety.

Leona had an idea, thought a suggestion to Kevin, and then had Fu Lin bring Sergeant Palmer into the link. They shared the clear's tactical views with her and filled her in on the plan as the Orgotek agent ran to a truck that hadn't yet been destroyed. The biokinetic appeared as if out of thin air, covering the engineer with his bio-lasers while the Legion squad focused their fire on the monster. Sirens approached in the distance.

Meanwhile, Kevin climbed under the truck and got to work.

• • •

"You say the *Ministry* agent called you, Dr. Herald?"

"Yes, sir," said the olive-skinned man through his thick beard. "She sent a message to the clinic and made it clear we'd need everyone we could scramble. She just told us to look for the center of the chaos."

• • •

The sergeant crouched behind the makeshift barrier as the vitakinetic dulled the pain. Blood ran down the side of her face and her jaw was dislocated, but thanks to the bearded medic's help her vision cleared. Across the mental network, Kevin said everything was ready.

"Okay, I'm good," she thought to the now-linked rex. Despite his protest, she nudged the doctor back and stood up. She gestured to the truck and lifted it off Kevin with a pulse of psi. She drew on her noetic connection to the other psions for the strength to throw it right into the Aberrant monster's open mouth.

Kevin stood up, dramatically snapped his fingers with a spark, and the vehicle's modified power cells overloaded in just the right way to bypass all safeguards and detonate. The shockwave pulverized the few windows still intact as the explosion half-ripped the monster's jaw off and left it vulnerable to a fresh fusillade of rockets from the Fifth Legion soldier. Everyone with a weapon, from bio-lasers, to guns, to telekinetically-thrown rubble, focused their fire until the monster stopped moving.

The dust settled over a neighborhood briefly returned to the Aberrant War. The surviving civilians fled, likely to the nearby hospital, as afraid of the local authorities' response as the psions. Only the town's distance from anything important had delayed the FSM's inevitable show of force.

As the smoke cleared, half a dozen psions from as many psi orders caught their breath and looked at each other, having migrated to the area in front of the former-hotel. For a few minutes their training, resources, and abilities had interlocked into something stronger than the sum of their parts, and they collectively saved a town. Even with the telepathic link broken, they all shared a thought...

"We're going to have to explain this to Æon, aren't we?"

# INTRODUCTION

"Civilization is to groups what intelligence is to individuals. It is a means of combining the intelligence of many to achieve ongoing group adaptation."
— Octavia Butler

At its heart, **Trinity Continuum: Æon** is a game about human psions. You can play Talents, psiads, Jinketsu (Superiors), or even aliens, but in most campaigns, psions will be both the focus and most characters. Psions can hold any job and travel anywhere on Earth, Luna, or even worlds circling other suns. However, to gain their powers, every psion must first join a psi order. They may later leave this psi order, but to become a psion, they must convince a psi order to allow them to awaken their powers in a Prometheus Chamber.

While each psi order organizes itself around a single noetic Aptitude, psions with any Aptitude can belong to any psi order — the only exception is quantakinesis. Prior to the 2111 purge of Chitra Bhanu, this order's proxy did not permit any other psi order to use the quantakinetic Prometheus Chamber. However, regardless of what order they belong to, a psion could possess any of the other seven Aptitudes. Even Chitra Bhanu had a modest number of psions with other Aptitudes.

Players and Storyguides should also remember each psi order is more than the keepers of a single Prometheus Chamber. Each order has ties to a specific nation or region, and each order has a particular function. The psi orders span the gamut from a metacorporation producing both commercial and consumer products, to a branch of the UN military or the Chinese government, to several NGOs (non-governmental organizations).

Most importantly, each psi order can be an organizing principle for entire campaigns. While some players and Storytellers prefer campaigns where the characters are freelance psions or work for another organization — most often the Æon Trinity, one excellent answer to who the characters are and what they do is they are all members of a single psi order. At that point, which psi order the players and Storyguide choose will shape the campaign in profound ways.

For example, while they could be doing everything from fighting Aberrants on Khantze Lu Ge to hunting down terrorists in the UAN, or even helping to foment revolution in the FSA, characters who belong to the Legions are soldiers. Similarly, characters who belong to the Æsculapian Order are first responders or medical personnel, and characters in the Ministry all work for the Chinese government. Which psi order the characters work for serves to help establish the overall tone and feel of the campaign, which can range from claustrophobic intrigue for a campaign focused around the Ministry, to daring heroism in the case of either the Æsculapian Order or the Legions, to subtle interventions and an often quieter form of heroism, for ISRA campaigns.

Which psi order the characters belong to can also establish which region of the world the characters are familiar with. While most psi orders recruit people from anywhere on Earth, Luna, and even beyond, all members of Orgotek have spent time in the FSA, just as members of the Legions have spent at least a short time in Australia, while members of Norça speak Spanish or Portuguese, and have spent significant amounts of time in Sudamérica, just as members of the Ministry speak Chinese and are intimately familiar with China's government and society. Those psi orders with less of a local focus, like the Æsculapian Order, ISRA, or Upeo wa Macho after the exodus, are all defined by their mission and goals.

Because of the differences between psi orders, even characters with the same Aptitude will be quite different depending upon which psi order they belong to. For example, a vitakinetic belonging to the Æsculapian Order is almost certainly either a physician, a nurse, or a first responder. A vitakinetic in the Legions is likely a combat medic. A vitakinetic belonging to Upeo wa Macho likely specializes in healing interstellar colonists or people living in remote portions of Earth or in helping to heal, augment, and protect the rest of their team of interstellar explorers.

Even if the characters work for the Æon Trinity, another organization, or are freelance psions who don't work for any organization, which psi order or orders they originally belonged to matters, since all psions spent at least some time in a psi order and have at least a few contacts there. Regardless of what sort of campaign a Storyguide plans to run, some or all of the eight psi orders will be important — maybe as the characters' employer, their allies, or perhaps even as their primary foe.

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**Prometheus Unbound** is a supplement for **Trinity Continuum: Æon**. This book contains detailed descriptions of the eight psi orders. In addition to deeply describing their structure, goals, and important personnel, each of these descriptions also contains information about their allies, their foes and opponents, and new Paths and Edges specifically for members of that psi order.

This book also contains information about new ways to use psi powers, including more about combining Aptitudes and information about ways different psi orders are attempting to overcome the limitations imposed on their powers by the Prometheus Chambers. Finally, this book also reveals new technologies the various psi orders have developed for their use, from the latest Orgotek bioapps to new weapons and armor for the Legions.

## CHAPTERS

- **Chapter One: The Æsculapian Order** expands on the existing information about this order's existence as an international and, more recently, interstellar organization dedicated to saving lives and providing medical treatment.
- **Chapter Two: Chitra Bhanu** reveals secrets about this psi order, including both how it has changed since its near destruction in 2111, and how it keeps its existence a secret, and its current goals.
- **Chapter Three: ISRA** provides additional details about this mystical and esoteric psi order and the many people it provides spiritual guidance to.
- **Chapter Four: The Legions** describes this military psi order and how it functions as both a psi order and a branch of the UN military.
- **Chapter Five: The Ministry of Noetic Affairs** provides more information on this secretive psi order and the role it plays in the Chinese government.
- **Chapter Six: Norça** contains further details about this mysterious psi order and its goals and methods.
- **Chapter Seven: Orgotek** discusses the relationship between this psi order and the metacorp of the same name, as well as its role in the FSA.
- **Chapter Eight: Upeo wa Macho** contains further information about this psi order and how it is adjusting to its return to Earth, and in particular to the UAN, after years out among the stars.
- **Chapter Nine: Psi Powers** provides rules for using Aptitudes and Modes beyond commonly used powers, and allows psions to perform entirely new effects as long as they make sense as something a particular Aptitude or Mode could manage.
- **Chapter Ten: Technology** contains descriptions of specialized, and occasionally secret and restricted technologies each psi order has developed for their use.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following works can help provide inspiration for a variety of different scenarios and campaigns.

## FILMS & TELEVISION

*Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* (2013-2020): This show is a bit uneven, but if you want a show with hypertech and people with powers working from the shadows, this is a good choice and a solid source of inspiration for either a Norça or Orgotek focused campaign.

*Arrival* (2017): An utterly amazing and powerful story of alien contact where the aliens have a very different relationship with time than humanity, and humans can learn to have the same relationship with time, so it's definitely useful inspiration for playing clears.

*Babylon 5* (1994-1998): While notably more malevolent than the Ministry, Babylon 5's Psi Corps provides excellent inspiration for a particularly grim and gritty Ministry campaign. Also, if you want inspiration for space battles involving The Legions, you can't do better than *Babylon 5*.

*The Dead Zone* (tv series – 2002-2007): The protagonist of this series is a powerful clairsentient who

uses his abilities to solve mysteries and right wrongs, just like many ISRA teams. If you want a fun show that provides a great deal of inspiration for playing a clear, watch it and enjoy.

*Motherland Fort Salem* (2020): Yes, it's a show about young witches in the military, but it's not a bad depiction of PK military training and the fact that each trained PK, just like the witches in the show, is effectively a walking piece of heavy artillery.

*Rescue Me* (2004-2011): One of the best shows about first responders, this show, set in New York City, can be an excellent source of inspiration for a campaign involving the *Æsculapian Order*.

*Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-1994): While the Starship Enterprise is a hardtech spacecraft with technology far in advance of anything humanity has in 2123, this show provides the overall feel of an Upeo wa Macho campaign, despite being somewhat dated with respect to issues of race and gender.

## BOOKS & COMICS

*Change* by Ann Maxwell: A small organization of psychics seeks to contact and make alliances with aliens while also attempting to change the Earth for the better. This novel is a good inspiration for either ISRA or the Upeo wa Macho.

*FF* by Jonathan Hickman (2012-2014): This comic series about the Fantastic Four and their Future Foundation contains stories of heroic engineers using advanced technology to both save and change the world. If you want inspiration for an Orgotek campaign, this is a good choice.

*Horizons* by Mary Rosenblum: A physically enhanced psychic searches for her brother's killer in a tale of deception, espionage, and conspiracies. If you want inspiration for a Ministry or Norça campaign focused on espionage, read this excellent novel.

*Inheritors of Earth* by Poul Anderson and Gordon Eklund: A small secretive group of people with special abilities confront and defeat powerful beings intent on dominating humanity – a good inspiration for a Chitra Bhanu campaign.

The *Tower and Hive* series by Anne McCaffrey: In this five novel series, consisting of *The Rowan*, *Damia*, *Damia's Children*, *Lyon's Pride*, and *The Tower and the Hive*, humanity uses potent psychic powers, and especially teleportation to expand into space and settle habitable planets circling other suns. This series is perfect inspiration for an Upeo wa Macho campaign.

*Polymorph* by Scott Westerfeld: A lone shapeshifter in a near future New York City engages in espionage and a deadly game of cat and mouse with another shapeshifter. If you need some inspiration for a Norça campaign, this is a good choice.

*The Quantum Magician* & *The Quantum Garden* by Derek Künsken: Several individuals with the ability to see patterns where others cannot fight an oppressive government and pull off an impressive caper. This is another solid choice for inspiration for an ISRA campaign.

*The Sector General Series* by James White: An excellent and quite long series about humans and aliens in an interstellar hospital. This series is a wonderful source of inspiration for a medicine focused *Æsculapian Order* campaign.

*The Touchstone Trilogy* by Andrea K. Höst: Psychic soldiers fight monsters from other world and different dimensions in a fun novel that is a good inspiration for a high-powered Legion chronicle.

*The Whole Man* by John Brunner: UN telepaths use their powers to help solve various serious problems. If you want a more positive take on the Ministry, take a look at this novel.

CHAPTER ONE

# THE ÆSCULAPIAN ORDER

"I can think of no more stirring symbol of man's humanity to man than a fire engine."
— Kurt Vonnegut, The Sirens of Titan

The Æsculapian Order predates not only humanity's noetic awakening but also the Ultimatum, the OpNet Crash, and even the Aberrant War itself. Its origins lie in the Nova Age, amid rising tensions between humanity and their quantum-powered cousins. While still years away from open conflict, novas wrought havoc on the world around them with increasing regularity.

The Æon Society's various foundations helped where they could, but between their proximity to the nova 'problem' and finite resources, some people fell through the cracks. Where Æon left off, the Æsculapian Order picked up. Despite their different focuses and strategies, the two have the same goals in healing and protecting humanity. Even if Æon may question Zweidler's micromanaging tendencies or the Æsculapians may question Æon's lighter touch, neither would dare dispute the other's dedication.

Proxy Matthieu Zweidler originated the term Prometheus Chamber. The famous statue in the large entrance hall of the Montressor Clinic, Prometheus' Gift, commemorates this name. This statue depicts Prometheus touching the forehead of a young woman. Most people believe the artist loosely modelled the art piece on Dr. Zweidler's protégé, Dr. Magalie Alcine. While he's a devout humanist and not given to talk about gods, Dr. Zweidler always refers to the Prometheus Effect as a gift. He emphasizes that everyone who receives this gift is obligated to use their powers both wisely and for the benefit of humanity.

# PATIENT HISTORY

Abraham Scherer started building the Æsculapian Order in Basel where he grew up. The Order is named for Æsculapius, the Greek god of medicine, and had the goal of relieving the EU's burden of nova-based disasters. He knit together an alliance of smaller disaster relief organizations. Scherer recruited former and current members of Æon's Neptune and Triton Divisions to round out the initial lineup of rescue workers and doctors. Never one to turn down a helping hand, Æon shared resources and personnel to help establish the growing Order.

The Order outgrew the EU's borders out of sheer necessity even before the Aberrant War began. Traditional medicine couldn't keep up with the broadening range and increased frequency of medical problems from nova-caused disasters. Even at the height of the Nova Age, few hospitals were equipped to deal with exotic energy weapons or diseases originating from nova physiology, let alone both at the same time. Until around 2060, most hospitals were often directly or indirectly run by novas and their sympathizers. Scherer's work led the way to closing that gap.

The Order barely broke stride when the War ended. The Æsculapians' skills at crisis management, combined with a brilliance suited to combat new medical challenges, made them the perfect allies during reconstruction. Abraham's vision had borne fruit and by the time Dr. Matthieu Zweidler assumed directorship of the Order in 2086, the organization seemed almost overqualified for 'mundane' crises related to weather or earthquakes.

Zweidler has never been able to leave well enough alone, one of the qualities which earned him his position, and so he expanded the Æsculapians' reach. He built a stronger presence on extraterrestrial settlements and offered medical care to those on Earth who'd been lacking for far too long. It was during this time certain governments and corporations first pushed back against this perceived intrusion. It was one thing to invite oneself to a hurricane-ravaged city or war-torn Lunar mining colony, but it was another to empower an oppressed working class during peacetime. Æon smoothed over some of these interactions, helping the Order step up so they themselves could devote energy to other pursuits like Operation ReWrite.

The mission itself is paramount, and even after decades of experience Zweidler still must be reminded he should sometimes ask permission rather than act and seek forgiveness later. Thanks to his hospital background, Matthieu sees the world as an emergency room where unnecessary political concerns interrupt necessary triage.

## REX LICENSE

What does Æsculapian certification track, exactly? Not to codify game mechanics into setting terms, but the vitakinetic Modes have a five-level rating system to determine proficiency, as do the Rapport and Psychbending Modes of Telepathy for therapeutic purposes. While not classified to the same detail, any noetic ability capable of affecting or improving the mind and body can receive a basic competency certification. This includes accessing memories via Mindshare, altering bioelectrical patterns via Electromanipulation, or even teleporting patients with Translocation, and others at Storyguide discretion. Auxiliary Modes possessed by vitakinetics are recorded as well, just to be sure the order can utilize everyone's talents to the fullest.

In pursuit of the greater good he butts heads with not only governments (and, by extension, the UN), but even with other allies on occasion. Æsculapians sometimes struggle with 'too many cooks' scenarios at the sites of major crises, which by definition are tense situations where a misstep can break down communications at the worst moment.

## MODERN MEDICINE

Vitakinesis and other noetic powers vastly altered assumptions about the Æsculapians' work. Zweidler immediately established a licensing system to supplement traditional medical credentials. The system categorizes psions' capabilities in healing the sick through vitakinesis and through physical and mental therapy using other Aptitudes. Æsculapian officials use these credentials to determine staffing in Æsculapian facilities and assignments for emergency situations in the field. Other psi orders aren't bound by this licensing system in any way, but vitakinetics outside the Order often pursue certification for its own sake. In addition, corporations require a license to hire freelancers.

Noetic science contributes to the clinical side of work, as well. Biotech and the technologies spun off development have innumerable life-saving applications. Thanks to their partnerships with Orgotek and Norça, the Æsculapian Order has the largest collection of medical biotech in known space outside of Qinshui. Æsculapian clinics lead in testing new medical treatments for mundane and Quantum Flux diseases alike.

The Æsculapians' tendency to invite themselves across contentious borders isn't limited to crisis situations. Despite the high standard of living in the solar system, environmental toxins or outbreaks of disease often affect communities neglected by their leaders. The Order might sneak doctors into such an area to treat the local populace or smuggle patients out. If someone appears on a clinic's doorstep to volunteer for an experimental treatment for their rare disease, the doctors won't turn them away for political reasons. The Beaulac Clinic on Luna sees a lot of anonymous corporate or criminal indentures seeking medical treatment beyond what the mining companies or their captains would provide.

## UNEINGESCHRÄNKTE NOTHILFE

The Æsculapian Order doesn't have a covert ops or secret intelligence division. Its infiltration specialists aren't a formal faction. They've been part of the Order since the beginning, but the sudden uptick in Talents around the time the proxies revealed themselves increased their numbers. Dr. Zweidler decided he had to call them something: "Uneingeschränkte Nothilfe," which translates as "Emergency Assistance Without Restrictions." Often shortened to simply "Uneingeschränkte," ("Unrestricted" in this context) they use skills gained from disreputable pasts to smuggle medicine or personnel through dangerous areas.

Every now and again someone proposes making the Uneingeschränkte Nothilfe a formal intelligence unit or a secret strike force attached to the Order's security division. Dr. Zweidler rejects the idea out of hand every time, though not entirely on moral principle. Such a group would have to work outside his oversight to maintain plausible deniability, and in his eyes the risks are too high.

While not exclusively their province, most of the Æsculapians' Talents fall under the Uneingeschränkte umbrella. It's also common among psions who left their original orders to join Dr. Zweidler's mission (as opposed to psions activated by another order for the Æsculapians). For more information, see the Uneingeschränkte Nothilfe Path on p. 30.

The Order's willingness to sidestep political barriers extends to recruiting skilled infiltrators to their response teams. Former military or intelligence agents in search of redemption, many with buried or classified pasts, can find new purpose and a respite from front-line violence as Æsculapians. They use their skills to dodge political blockades, surveillance, and security forces to get help to those who need it or liberate patients trapped by circumstance. Order leadership is very careful to plan and balance these sorts of operations, to limit rumors of covert ops squads masquerading as doctors. As far as Dr. Zweidler is concerned, the only thing as bad as crossing that line would be giving people the impression they would.

On the more straightforward side, the Order performs cosmetic procedures or temporary enhancements for patients willing to pay. No small portion of the Order's funding comes from executives who want to restore their apparent youth or club kids looking to dabble in transhumanist modification. However, they also perform procedures people actually need, such as gender confirmation or fertility treatments, for free.

Dr. Zweidler (and the Order, by extension) shrugs off criticism for performing these procedures because of their role in supporting their ongoing mission. The proxy is more focused on lives saved over optics springing from private funding or favor-trading. The actual work speaks for itself, and it speaks loudly.

# HUMANITY'S HEALTHCARE PLAN

The Montressor headquarters in Basel, the beating heart of the Order, is a medical complex as populated as some small towns. From the outside, portions of the building still reflect its historical origins as a monastery. First-time visitors do a double-take when they get inside and see modern medical and scientific facilities within the centuries-old building. While Dr. Zweidler has carefully respected the old structure, the interior may as well be a different planet.

Montressor forms the central hub of the Clinic Network, the organizational structure of the Order's institutions both great and small. Montressor directly manages the clinics and stations in much of Central and Western Europe, as well as other research facilities around the world. The other research labs sort out the clinics and stations around them, but Zweidler insists everything still makes its way to Montressor where he can check reports on any individual facility as needed.

Port-au-Prince hosts the secondary headquarters for the Order, but to most outsiders there is little difference in function or staffing numbers. Its focus is more on managing the rescue stations and coordinating with other psi orders over the high-level R&D work seen in its Swiss counterpart. While marginally smaller, it's certainly more active on a daily basis, and its director Dr. Magalie Alcine (p. 26) probably works as hard as Dr. Zweidler does at the end of the day.

Every facility, from the 20-person rescue stations to research campuses of over a thousand, carries a mix of administration, medical, rescue, and security personnel. Percentages vary depending on specific facilities' needs, as determined by Gemma Fiosi's guidelines (p. 26). For example, rescue stations don't require the same amount of security as a similarly-sized clinic full of drugs and vulnerable patients (especially when pilots and drivers are more likely to have training in this regard than doctors).

## RESEARCH LABS

The research labs are few but large, no more than one to two per continent, and none outside of Earth, yet. Each is staffed by over a thousand doctors, administrators, support staff, and so forth. They have extensive R&D departments to design equipment for rescue and relief missions tailored to the needs of their individual regions. Each research lab's sizable administration department handles logistics and security for the smaller facilities under their umbrella. They also contain areas set aside for meetings and PR, and if Dr. Zweidler must make an announcement or hold a press conference he uses one of these facilities if he's away from Basel.

The research labs advance medical science and find ways to assist and heal humanity. With the help of Orgotek and Norça's scientists, the Æsculapians seek any advantage they can gain over a universe of biological threats which grow larger by the day. Researchers remain busy trying to keep up with organisms and toxins brought back from alien worlds as well as biological threats and enhanced diseases from Quantum Flux Zones.

Æsculapian research policy includes mandatory breaks and rotation of doctors on long projects, to

keep team members from getting isolated and losing sight of their goals. If a team can't spare a given researcher, they're allowed to consult from a distance. Dr. Zweidler established this policy after desperation led some scientists down dark paths while the world recovered from the War. The fall of the Chitra Bhanu has, in his eyes, further justified his fears of rogues ruining everything the Order has worked toward.

## THE CLINIC NETWORK

The clinics make up the bulk of the Æsculapian network. They range in size from 20-200 people, based on needs of the region, population density, distance from other clinics, etc. The clinics focus on treating patients, with doctors (both psion and neutral) in different fields and support staff in addition to logistics and administration. The smaller, more remote clinics often have doctors with credentials in multiple fields. The larger clinics are more likely to have non-vitakinetic psions such as therapists with Telepathy or security guards with Psychokinesis in addition to a broader lineup of specialized physicians.

Clinics come in two flavors. The first focuses on helping people neglected by local authorities or who otherwise lack access to proper hospitals. These are assumed to be the default when discussed internally. Clinics are capable of handling general health concerns for the local populace, including dental care and mental health. The most isolated clinics may have a vitakinetic (accompanied by an assistant or guard) who travels through the region bringing medical care directly to the locals, perhaps with a mobile infirmary (p. 175).

These clinics cause the most diplomatic friction, as their presence helps and empowers people whose leaders would prefer remain vulnerable. Only the risk of attention from the rest of the world prevents local governments or corporations from openly interfering. Even then, in parts of the FSA or the Middle East, the Order must make special deals to receive supply shipments or transport patients or staff in and out of the area.

The second variety, nicknamed 'premium' clinics (though the tone varies with the speaker), are larger and centered in urban areas, often large cities or arcologies. Premium clinics offer the same assistance as regular clinics, but also serve those who can pay more. Sometimes these services buy political or corporate favors.

Premium clinics offer voluntary body modifications or cosmetic procedures, including environmental conversions, youth restoration, and short-term physical enhancements. It's an open secret the Order sometimes charges wealthier patients more for these services, to better fund the medical care offered to their less-fortunate fellows. While not casually available at every clinic, some might also sell bioapps and rare cyberware implants manufactured outside Nippon.

Premium clinics are also more likely to have vitakinetic specialists, whereas standard clinics are more focused on general care. Of course, every clinic knows the location and capabilities of the nearest premium clinics in case someone needs specialized treatment. Every clinic, regardless of type, has access to a special communications channel where administrators and logistics staff can coordinate on issues related to the larger region or share resources in emergencies.

## RESCUE STATIONS

Stations, the third type of Order facility, prioritize rescue and crisis relief. They're the same size as standard clinics on the low end but rarely reach the size of premium clinics. Most of the Order's vehicle operators and rescue specialists are attached to stations, and they live there full-time. Stations in remote areas are often the largest, as they double as clinics, whereas the most populated or accessible areas might have a couple dozen paramedic staff and vehicles. On Earth, the Order places stations so workers can easily reach multiple different clinics, particularly for the rare scenario where a patient has to be transported to a premium clinic in a hurry.

Space-rescue stations on extrasolar settlements are a relatively recent addition to the organization and are a common career option for the Order's teleporters and former members of the Seventh Legion. These stations, when possible, reach or even exceed the size of the largest clinics as they may be the central source of advanced healthcare in a given corner of space. Every station away from Earth has a few customized ships for maneuvering in local space, and the Order has a handful of deep space vessels, some of them jump ships with teleportational helms (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, p. 291) for interstellar transport and rescue.

Veterans of both the Legions and the Æsculapians claim the two orders have much in common, from a certain perspective. The differences are obvious, but both fight an ongoing battle on multiple fronts, hoping their training and the chain of command will get them through utter chaos.

## FRANCE

The Æsculapian Order focuses its efforts on Earth on *la Blessure*. The Order alone cannot heal the wound delivered to France, but they do what they can for people. Even three years after the *Esperanza* crash, relief workers clear rubble from newly-collapsed buildings or reconnect settlements of survivors to the wider world.

The Order's docs aren't just there to heal the injured or get survivors to safety, but to support those who can't or won't leave the region. Æsculapian neutrals and Talents are overrepresented in teams sent into *la Blessure*, due to Quantum Flux Zones' interference with noetic powers. The Order's tacticians carefully build teams who can stand up to extreme situations but won't be completely incapacitated by a QFZ. More than most crisis zones, teams in *la Blessure* need a balanced set of skills to deliver medicine and supplies to settlements, transport in doctors, and transport out refugees and patients. Even the relatively-safer shantytowns on the edge of the disaster are plagued by bandits, Aberrants, and their mutated cultists.

For those who do get out, their problems don't end at a Zone's border. Many need long-term treatment, but even more importantly they'll need a place to stay. Æsculapians with diplomatic skills spend much of their time finding places for French refugees to live.

In addition to the usual problems with resettlement, they must prove to potential host countries the refugees are safe to take. This means thorough examinations to weed out hidden mutants, cultists, and Aberrants, as well as carriers of Quantum Flux diseases. The true difficulty isn't in finding and treating these individuals (or discreetly alerting Legionnaires when appropriate) but in establishing their ability to handle resettlement.

### SUBJECT: REFUGEE SCREENING

**From:** Dr. Linh Hương, Æsculapian Resettlement Initiative

**To:** Tain Sung, Ministry Office of Semiotics, Shanghai Division

**Encryption:** DSE

**Transmission type:** Text

**Date:** 15:4:2122, 2:54pm

First off, thanks for the pictures from home. They make me homesick, but I appreciate the reminder that there is still beauty in the world.

I've looked into the refugees currently being screened, as you requested. All of them have been cleared of serious physiological ailments. Some still require medication for now, but in my professional opinion they're physically safe for Shanghai.

My concerns, and their problems, run deeper. The corporate sponsors arranging their resettlement have been rushing their psych evaluations. I'm trying to work with them, but the sponsors want to leave their problems to a 'proper' Ministry telepath when they reach China. As if my abilities are any different from yours.

Your worries about cultists are reasonable (if extreme), but the bigger problem is trauma. These people have been exposed to horrors requiring more than a good night's rest and anti-anxiety meds. Some have been subjected to memetic assaults. Many are too fragile to face simple culture shock, let alone the stresses of relocation.

If you can do so from your end, please try to buy me some time.

Æsculapians sometimes invite themselves along for larger operations within *la Blessure* (if they're not already involved). The other psi orders try not to appear ungrateful regarding medical assistance, especially when they have their own vitakinetics. Regardless, few things frustrate the glory-minded like being assigned to escort medics in the field, derisively called "doc duty."

## Khantze Lu Ge

Even when the biggest problem on Khantze Lu Ge was the simmering conflict between the locals, China, and the UN, the Æsculapians found the colony a little crowded. The Aberrant invasion has kept them busy, though. While the Order still hopes to build a research lab on the planet, they have several clinics and stations scattered around the arcologies. They divide their efforts between standard colony difficulties and supporting colonists caught in the Aberrants' war.

Dr. Zweidler has sought space for a research lab away from Earth and sees Khantze Lu Ge as ideal once it's retaken from Kali and Yog-Death. Either the extraterrestrial environment or the fallout from a war between two Prime Threats would present perfect research opportunities, let alone both. However, the political tension between the UN and the colony's government has given even the proxy pause. For now, he waits to make his pitch when the colony can catch its breath and rebuild.

In the face of invasion, the Order falls back on the lessons of its origins before and during the Aberrant War. Coordinated by Benedict Strait (p. 26), Æsculapian forces focus on helping people caught in the collateral damage in addition to patching up soldiers and agents of the other psi orders. The Uneingeschränkte are probably seen in the highest percentages on Khantze Lu Ge, using their skills to rescue civilians from occupied territory (and, for some, keeping ahead of old

### Strength in Adversity

The Æsculapian Order has its share of Talents. While they don't have as many as the Norça recruit with their strict standards or who are drawn to Æon, the Order's mission attracts the exceptionally skilled and passionate. The combination of *la Blessure*'s Quantum Flux Zones and the chaos of disaster relief make perfect soil for growing new Talents. Many Talents Inspired in the field either already were or are shortly afterwards awarded the designation "Uneingeschränkte." (p. 16)

grudges from Earth). A few have learned of Project Hestia (see **Distant Worlds**, p. 44), and while they haven't gotten directly involved, Benny will soon have to contact Æon and offer to help or risk some of the Limitless taking off to do something drastic and ill-advised.

Many Æsculapians became emotionally invested in the planet and its people (and vice-versa) during the Upeo exile. They improvised and recycled a lot of equipment to maintain their high standards of care while disconnected from Earth's resources. They've developed many useful techniques now studied at Montressor and by the rest of the Order, but many individuals have been resistant to going back themselves.

The Order tries not to deploy individuals to any particular location for too long to lessen the psychological strain, but solidly half of the Æsculapians left behind when the Upeo vanished are still here. Normally they would have rotated out by now, but these 'long-timers' have been reluctant to leave and Strait has insisted it's better to let them stay than bring newcomers up to speed. The Order's administrators are considering forcing the issue before something unpleasant happens. At this point, doing so would require replacing enough clinic staff that it would disrupt operations on the colony and back on Earth. Right now, they're weighing the pros and cons of reaching out to the Æon Trinity for advice or direct support.

## Middle East

Between the Quantum Flux Zones and the constant shift of territory-hungry warlords, the Æsculapians have their work cut out for them. Their biggest foothold in the region is, unsurprisingly, Israel-Palestine where they have several large premium clinics coordinating an extensive network of other clinics and stations throughout the region. Other countries, particularly Persia, have been resistant to long-term Æsculapian facilities. The Order has had to settle for establishing a handful of stations where possible and sending teams out to help the locals.

The Order has made slow inroads, but in many places, they've unofficially taken over abandoned hospitals in war-torn towns bordering the wastelands. They've had the greatest success in revitalizing medical facilities abandoned after being ravaged by bandits, mutants, or warlords.

## Quantum Flux Diseases

Outside of regional efforts, the Æsculapian Order seeks a long-term solution for the problem of Quantum Flux Diseases. Not only did the Chitra Bhanu purge rob the Æsculapians of their most useful allies, it also tainted research previously done with the quantakinetics. Over a decade later, Order scientists working with their counterparts in Norça still pore over Chitra Bhanu-assisted advancements to make sure the research doesn't contain hidden traps.

Out of desperation, the Order watches for anyone with a latency geared towards quantakinesis, in the hopes they may develop a helpful Auxiliary Mode. While not official protocol, Æsculapians in the field are expected to keep an eye out for any biotech or information related to the Chitra Bhanu to bring back to the lab.

Rebecca Bue Li's deteriorating condition has put a ticking clock on Dr. Zweidler's research into the subject. He's currently mulling over the possibility of seeking out a rogue survivor of the purge and bringing them into the fold. But even if he could do so and secure their assistance, the bigger barrier is Rebecca's own distrust and the complications of informed consent. Even beyond the larger subject of Zweidler's research into Quantum Flux diseases, the difficulties in saving his fellow proxy weigh heavily on him. They weren't especially close before her illness, but there is a unique bond of shared experience between all of the proxies.

# ALLIES

Saving people is a good way to make friends. As an organization predating humanity's psionic awakening by half a century, the Æsculapians have had longer than the other psi orders to build alliances. Even when they invite themselves into situations, their allies don't want to publicly snub or rebuke an organization that has consistently proven to have humanity's best interests at heart.

The Æsculapians' closest alliances have been with their large mission partners. Some stand side-by-side with them in the field, while some build the tools the Order uses to protect and heal people. Scientists, politicians, and field operatives alike become part of Dr. Zweidler's work, with varying (and sometimes capricious) degrees of appreciation.

## ORGOTEK

Orgotek and the Æsculapian Order have worked together since the dawn of the noetic era, with collaborations on biotech between the most basic R&D labs to the proxies themselves. Only Dr. Zweidler's responsibilities managing the Order prevent him from monopolizing Alex Cassel's time with big ideas and theories he'd like to see tested in Orgosoft's labs. When the two do have the opportunity to invest time to brainstorm or get directly involved in development, their sessions become the stuff of legend among their research teams. The proxies' ability to affect their own biology means they can work for hours without rest, only stopping to eat — and even then, only stopping to keep from making a mess in the lab.

Outside of those rare in-person collaborations, the two organizations come together as design labs. The orders work on ongoing projects like bioapps to permanently enhance neutrals, potentially allowing those living with disability or persistent injury to live active and comfortable lives. Some of these take the form of prosthetics while others are implants that can hypothetically bond to organs or the nervous system.

The Port-au-Prince lab in particular develops a lot of bioware to be used in the field for relief efforts. Physical and psi-enhancers are common, but some of their prototypes involve small folding vehicles or gurneys that can actively stabilize patients. Æsculapian emergency teams are a common venue for testing prototypes of all sorts.

## NORÇA

Aside from the obvious overlap in their specialized Aptitudes, few would expect the secretive, manipulative Norça and the open, compassionate Æsculapians to find much common ground. Apparently, a shared knowledge of biotech and passion for humanity bridges a lot of gaps. The Norça's understanding of biotech and the environment has been instrumental in studying the phenomenon of Corrupted zones and Quantum Flux diseases.

While not to the same degree as with Orgotek, the Æsculapians and Norça combine their efforts on bioware as well. They do their best work in Haiti's dynamic labs, where both the spiritual and physical environments are familiar and comfortable to the Sudamérican order. While the Haitian docs wouldn't assume they really know their associates, the Norça have been surprisingly open with them.

It's unclear if that association will survive the revelation that Proxy del Fuego has been hiding the remaining Chitra Bhanu.

## THE ÆON TRINITY

Æon and the Æsculapians have been friends and colleagues since the Order's initial formation. Today, the Trinity is one of the primary sources of the Order's funding, and Æsculapian emergency workers often cross paths with members of all divisions at some point or another. More specifically, they often team up with Chiron Initiative and Operation Panacea agents in the field, assisting with medical supplies to rebuild communities.

Trinity and Æsculapian operations often share supplies and personnel when they work in the same places. Æsculapian scientists help with Triton researchers and vice-versa, and more than a few doctors have left one organization for the other. Agents who've worked for both argue the main reason for the change is a difference in focus and active engagement, and for the most part there are no hard feelings regarding these shifting allegiances.

That said, sometimes working alongside the Æsculapian Order can feel crowded. While everyone in these scenarios is on the same side, if there's a situation where it might make sense for an Æsculapian to take charge they will try. Some would compare the experience to inviting someone to a party, knowing they'll likely hog attention with their stories. Sure, the stories are entertaining and everybody likes having the person around, but just try to get a word in edgewise.

It's one thing to say there's no competition involved, no single person has to be in charge and all, but it's another when someone still insists on being in charge even after having that conversation.

## UNITED NATIONS

Just as with the Æon Trinity, the Æsculapians and UN are a natural fit. Both have the best intentions, and it would be difficult for the Æsculapian Order to work on the scale they do without having the United Nations provide a diplomatic framework. This also means when Dr. Zweidler crosses a line (sometimes literally), the UN hear about it and have to talk to Order administrators about clearing things up.

The Æsculapians' work is valuable and while they're not always thrilled about it, the UN puts forth serious effort toward ensuring the Order can operate worldwide. Even still, they get regular attention from the UN Commission on Noetic Oversight (**Mission Statements**) reminding them even the most popular psi order must respect rules and boundaries. Sometimes those reminders personally come from Secretary-General Catherine Yu herself. She doesn't enjoy giving Dr. Zweidler a talking-to, but she doesn't shy away from it either.

The Æsculapians do their best to make the effort worth it, sometimes taking guidance from the UN on which hot spots need the most attention and where to deploy medical backup to support peacekeeping forces. On Khantze Lu Ge in particular, the ongoing efforts of Benedict Strait (p. 26) kept the UN in the fight long past the point they'd have retreated, while still tiptoeing around the political tensions on the planet. The bonds formed there are one reason the Æsculapians back on Earth haven't pushed harder to rotate out the more stubborn medical and rescue crews.

# FOES & THREATS

Saving people is also a good way to make enemies. Most of humanity appreciates the Æsculapian Order, but some thrive on oppression and inequality and are threatened by concepts like 'health care for all' and 'treating everyone with dignity.' Freeing people from the burdens of unhealthy living conditions or persistent illness weakens the tools of despotism, and despots despise that.

## FEDERATED STATES OF AMERICA

The Æsculapians fight an uphill battle in the FSA. Despite their reputation and the amount of good work they do via clinics, they are still sometimes scapegoated by anti-foreigner propaganda. The fact they'll help anyone, citizen or non-citizen alike, is enough to raise the ire and paranoia of the FSA's more deplorable citizens. It doesn't help that people sometimes come into the clinics, turn out to be latents, and leave to join the psi orders.

Wealthier citizens, especially those allied with metacorporations, are more than eager to avail themselves of the premium clinics' services while sneering at the standard ones, which are most heavily concentrated in and around the current boundaries of the Blight Zone. Trading advanced medical procedures for corporate favors is commonplace, but those favors and the wealth of first-class citizens still go to helping people who live outside the arcologies. Mobile infirmaries (p. 175) regularly 'patrol' some rural areas, harkening back to the days of country doctors cycling from town to town.

The Order's administrators carefully plan their work in the FSA, keeping the 'country' clinics separate from the 'city' clinics wherever possible to avoid the appearance of smuggling potential revolutionaries into arcologies or across district borders. This also has the added benefit of partially separating the most marginalized of the FSA's citizens and non-citizens from those most willing to do them harm. They can't stop city people from sneering at refugees or immigrants from smaller towns, but they can subtly segregate them to protect their more vulnerable patients. It does, however, create difficulties in moving medical supplies throughout the country.

The Order's Æon allies make a lot of their work in the country possible. The Æsculapians maintain a research lab close to Mercer Memorial Hospital, where they can easily get in touch with Triton Division's best and brightest and through them the Chicago chapter. Outside of Triton's corner of Æon, Æsculapians often coordinate with Chiron, sharing space and resources as they bring light to the darkest parts of the FSA.

## ABERRANT CULTS

The Æsculapians' mission to delve into disaster zones and assist people regularly brings them into

conflict with Aberrant cultists. Those areas most in need of the Order's assistance are also perfect recruitment pools for Aberrants extending a helping tentacle to those with nothing left to lose. Order docs and rescue teams often find themselves on the receiving end of an impromptu sermon from someone who thinks they've been 'tested' or 'saved.' Sometimes cultists deliberately injure themselves to create opportunities to proselytize to other patients. At worst, mutant zealots attack clinics full of 'heretics who need to be cleansed.'

The Order sees the ultimate affront in *la Blessure*, where they encounter *les Enfants Rouges*, a cult worshiping an Aberrant known as the Crimson Saint. The Crimson Saint styles herself a healer, and her cult maintains a delusional veneer of benevolence. Order medical teams in *la Blessure* must compete with the Saint's followers in order to shield the region's vulnerable from her clutches. (For more on *les Enfants Rouges*, see the **Æon Æxpansion**, p. 101 and **Terra Firma**, p. 38-39).

Khantze Lu Ge has its own cult problems. In addition to the loyal followers of the Aberrants Kali and Yog-Death, the Order medics must keep an eye out for Kali's blackmailed spies. The Æsculapian doctors don't actively interrogate their patients for information on her spy network. Things get fuzzier when someone confides in their doc and asks for help. Rescuing a spy's threatened family is far outside the Order's remit. At the same time, what should be done when delays could cost lives and sharing information with the Trinity or the other psi orders might be a violation of medical ethics?

## METACORPORATIONS

Even in a future where most people have their needs met, there are always those just scraping by. Employers who, in theory, are meant to elevate them instead keep them at subsistence level. Companies like Comstock Heavy Ores and Amalgamated Business Interests facilitated humanity's spread through the solar system by providing minerals and asteroid ice to assist in building extraterrestrial settlements. Those resources often come from exploited workers, sometimes paid in scrip, whose company doctors are more interested in keeping them upright than keeping them healthy. Offworld Æsculapian facilities like the Beaulac Clinic on Luna treat workers who sneak out of company housing seeking proper care or to even find a doctor willing to order them some bed rest.

## POLITICAL ELEMENTS AT HOME

A rising tide of political extremism in Switzerland, home of the Montressor headquarters, is pushing to isolate the country in the wake of the *Esperanza* disaster. While the Æsculapian Order is not a political entity, its presence as an international organization has made it the target of whisper campaigns and propaganda. Dr. Zweidler doesn't foresee the situation having an impact on day-to-day workings, but he has been strengthening Port-au-Prince's capabilities as a backup headquarters just in case. The Order's work is for humanity's benefit, and he won't let small minds confine it to Switzerland alone.

# ESTEEMED COLLEAGUES

Every member of the Order saves lives, from brilliant surgeon to the custodian who prevents an outbreak through sterilization. Zweidler dedicates all he is and does to this goal and has filled his order with others dedicated to the same.

## DR. MATTHIEU ZWEIDLER

Proxy Matthieu Zweidler is the head of a galaxy spanning organization of first responders and medical personnel. He's the vitakinetic proxy, but first and foremost, he's a physician. He spends most of his time managing the Æsculapian Order, but also still sees patients at the order's Montressor headquarters twice a week. Dr. Zweidler is the type of workaholic who thinks vacation is any time he's only doing two thirds his normal workload. He can also be an arrogant perfectionist, who does his best not to be too harsh on himself when he loses a patient.

Other members of the order know he can deliver uncompromising criticism, but they also understand he treats his own mistakes at least as seriously as those made by others, and he is equally determined to deliver praise where deserved. Although he has no patience with any form of carelessness or negligence, he understands tragedies can happen even when everyone involved does their best, and in these cases, he can be both kind and supportive. More than a few relatively new docs have been terrified when he personally called them into his office after some event where people under their care or who they

were attempting to rescue died. However, most discovered he wanted to let them know he believes they did their very best, and to remind them no physician or first responder can save everyone.

The oldest members of the order, who remember Dr. Zweidler before he became the vitakinetic proxy, still tease him that when he still suffered the occasional mild illness, he was absolutely the worst patient any of them ever had. Several senior members of the Æsculapian Order are convinced Dr. Zweidler regularly uses the coffee mug printed with "World's Worst Patient" his personal physician gave him in 2097 because he's perversely proud of this designation.

Also, since proxy Bue Li became ill, Dr. Zweidler's frustration that vitakinetics cannot cure Quantum Flux diseases on their own has grown increasingly serious. He funds research into improved treatment of these illnesses, while also seething because he believes his inability to treat them is because Dr. Bhurano's misdeeds led to the loss of quantakinesis. However, if he learns the truth, he will instead blame the Doyen, and will be overjoyed to work with Dr. Bhurano again.

### Dr. Magalie Alcine

Dr. Alcine has a talent for marrying the scientific with the spiritual that serves her well in working with patients and doctors of various faiths. This knack for connecting with people across cultural boundaries has made Zweidler's second-in-command a well-respected and appreciated figure within the Order. Her open mind doesn't translate to loose standards of excellence. She expects the doctors and rescuers under her to meet or surpass Zweidler's expectations. She effectively overseas the Order when he's neck-deep in research (especially with Cassel) and no outsider notices a difference.

### Jakob Neihaus

Jakob Neihaus occupies an unusual position as a high-ranking Talent serving a psi order. He's the Order's head of security, and the higher he's risen, the more he's begun to resent the noetically gifted. This prejudice is affecting his staffing choices and the way he deals with psions in the security forces. Despite his competence, watercooler whispers suggest his issues may end his tenure. His rumored replacement would either be his subordinate, the Zurich-born Algesis-prodigy Aprille Glück, or the socially awkward but Talented Tobias Cameron, Chicago native and head of North America's security operations.

### Dr. Gemma Fiosi

Despite reporting directly to Dr. Zweidler, Gemma gets around like middle management. She runs the Clinic Network and travels near-constantly, approving newly opened clinics and doing spot-checks on existing facilities. She leads a skilled administrative staff who handle personnel decisions but she's very hands-on ensuring the clinics continue to meet the Order's high standards. She's opinionated and passionate, quick to openly praise as well as openly condemn, and resolves discovered issues swiftly. This made her one of Zweidler's first recruits, and she acts with his authority and trust.

### Dr. Park Yujin

Originally from Korea, Yujin trained briefly with the Ministry before deciding their telepathic talents would see better use with the Æsculapians. Their star in the Order has risen rapidly as they focus on trauma recovery, counseling 'civilian' patients and fellow Order members struggling with the pressures of their work. They help patients all over Europe cope with PTSD from *la Blessure*. Yujin seems content where they are, but higher-ups in the Order debate if their skills would be better suited to the dedicated long-timers on Khantze Lu Ge or perhaps they should be promoted to help run the mental health department within either major headquarters.

### Benny Strait

Benedict "Benny" Strait is effectively in charge of the Æsculapian contingent on Khantze Lu Ge. He was originally a Legionnaire stationed to guard a clinic. He fell in love with and married an Order doctor named August. He left the Legions to better support the Æsculapians during the Upeo exile, and jokes he 'married into' the Order.

When the Aberrants invaded, he stepped up without hesitation to apply his training and tactical expertise to manage the Order's resources in the face of the siege. He's not the only Æsculapian in the colony with military experience or even the only psychokinetic, but he's proven himself the best leader for the current situation. He's inadvertently taken charge of the Order in the colony and he's trying to walk a fine line between requesting more tactical support and admitting he's ill-equipped for a longer conflict.

Not all Æsculapians can handle the Order's pressure and demands. Some struggle with hierarchy, some lack the stomach for the work, and others prioritize a lucrative career over humanity's needs. When these people find their way out, they often discover new opportunities waiting.

## DR. ELLA HUANG

Ella Huang always envisioned collaborating with Orgotek to create brilliant bioware for the Order. To this end she was assigned to the Port-au-Prince research labs. Unable to resist her curiosity, she looked through the "trash bin," a repository of projects mothballed for being dangerous or unethical. She was intrigued by experimental biotech that broke the rules set down by both orders' leadership. This became an opportunity when an old friend was dismissed from Orgotek for violating safety protocols. She secretly pocketed copies of "trash bin" research and left the Order to go into business with her friend, Abel Marr, where they've become the hot new thing in independent biotech.

(For more on Huang-Marr Biotechnics, see **Mission Statements**)

## DR. MELISSA SAUER

Melissa came from money, born to a pair of international diplomats and raised in their world. When she demonstrated a strong vitakinetic latency, she joined the Æsculapian Order. She clashed with the organization from the beginning. Her mundane skills were perfect for administration, but they felt her noetic talents were wasted behind a desk. After one argument too many with her superiors, Melissa considered another option and accepted an offer from the Æon Trinity.

She's working her way up through the ranks of Triton Division, which has found a better balance of her administrative and medical skills. She's still helping people, and applies her Iatrosis abilities to the occasional task, but now she's working in her preferred venue. In addition, her background makes her a perfect liaison with her former order for large coordinated operations.

## ALEX RICHMOND

Alex was already working as an ambulance driver in the FSA when a 'why not' latency test came back positive. He decided to lean into his established skillset, so he underwent the Prometheus Effect via the Orgotek Chamber. He became a rescue pilot for the Æsculapian Order, using Technokinesis to bond with his vehicles. He worked closely with the Order's allies in the Upeo wa Macho and was devastated when they vanished. He was equal parts overjoyed and disappointed when the teleporters returned and he discovered why they left in the first place.

One of his Teleporter contacts, a woman named Kayin Adebayo, called to let him know that she'd lost faith in Proxy Atwan and was going freelance. She had a lead on an affordable ship with a teleportational helm but needed crewmembers. Alex decided his friend needed him more than the Order did, and he joined her slowly-growing crew of freelancers aboard the *Bessie Coleman*.

## DR. NOEL FLETCHER

Noel was one of the Æsculapian medics stranded on Khantze Lu Ge during the teleporters' self-imposed exile. The young doctor made the best of it, but something in him broke when the Aberrants attacked. As a result, he hyper-focused on developing Algesis to protect his patients. Several months into the conflict, he discovered one of his patients was a cultist spy and snapped. He used his abilities to interrogate the man, keeping him alive and in pain until discovered by the other doctors.

Noel was locked up until the first jump ships could take him back to Earth in hopes of his rehabilitation. He escaped from custody after reaching the planet and now hides out around the edge of *la Blessure*, where he grapples with what he's done and tries to find a way back to being the healer he used to be.

# MORE ON RUNNING ÆSCULAPIAN CAMPAIGNS

Medical or rescue workers, especially in a science-fiction setting, offer variety to a story. They can be found pretty much anywhere, can travel, or remain stationary. They support a number of moods and themes as well. Gritty dramas are just as appropriate as tales of inspirational heroism or outright horror. They really shine in how their stories can be shaped to fit a wide variety of subgenres.

## PROCEDURALS

More than some factions, the Æsculapian Order lends itself well to 'adventure of the week' campaigns. The popularity of televisised medical dramas demonstrates the appeal of doctors tackling a new case or a new patient every week alongside their personal struggles. The same is true with dramatic series about firefighters or emergency workers. A future filled with Quantum-powered mutants, aliens, and strange new worlds adds engaging wrinkles to these classic frameworks.

A traditional procedural could showcase Æsculapians assisting survivors of Aberrant attacks or similar disasters. They might struggle with authorities for resources, clearances for special treatments, or permission to find accident victims in a restricted area. Setting the game in an extrasolar colony can add alien diseases, flora, and fauna to the list of potential threats. Take away teleporters, and that adds a dramatically-useful scarcity of resources. What do you do when you have to repair equipment and the nearest technician is light years away? How do you source or improvise replacement parts?

Remember that while things should be a challenge and the player characters shouldn't be able to assume they'll always 'win,' a Storyguide should give them a fair chance. A bit of convincing technobabble or a plausible longshot should lead to "Let's see what hoops you have to jump through to get it to work," instead of a flat "No." Let the pollen of the alien plant cure the poison, as long as getting it means braving some sort of gauntlet. Sure, that mining laser uses many of the same parts as the surgical laser, but can it be safely disassembled?

It can be a fine line, but what matters is making the victory feel earned.

## LONGER-FORM STORIES

Of course, Æsculapian stories can stretch beyond the weekly one-offs into longer adventures. Perhaps finding a cure means an expedition into an alien jungle, seeking out (and surviving!) an old Aberrant base on Luna, or following the trail of a surviving quantakinetic. Keeping someone alive while escorting them across dangerous terrain could become a multi-chapter trek. This could take them through hostile terrain in the style of *Saving Private Ryan*, a road trip across a dangerous continent, or evading pursuit through space in a ship.

Ongoing outbreaks of disease, especially something enhanced by Quantum Flux, can make for a multiple-session story arc, but it's important to regularly check in with the group. Such a story can easily devolve into the players simply reacting to every new case without any sense of progress. It's important to make sure they feel like active participants, and that they're not being ground down by the plot. Change things up by tasking them with finding the source of the outbreak, acquiring vital resources, performing contact tracing, or even just doing favors for patients.

An ongoing story arc can focus on the player characters' development over the patients they save or the latest disaster. They could be medical students, or doctors undergoing a residency. These sorts of games may resemble a procedural at first, and may even start as one before transitioning into a longer plot exploring the characters' skills (both mundane and otherwise) and the interpersonal drama that makes them tick.

In this vein, experienced medical practitioners having just emerged from the Prometheus Chamber would make for an interesting contrast. How does someone who's been practicing medicine for 20 years deal with suddenly closing wounds with a touch, or eradicating a cancer without even opening the patient up? A PhD new to Iatrosis may require instruction from someone fresh out of medical training but has mastered the ability to heal and alter noetic templates. A physical therapist can give their patients training wheels with Augendis and must learn not to become over-reliant on their powers.

## OUTSIDE THE MEDKIT

Stories built around doctors, scientists, and rescuers don't have to focus on the medicine or the rescuing. Improving the lives of patients doesn't always mean curing what ails them. A medical case or a disaster could simply be the plot device that brings a group of psions in contact with the source of a larger story.

A team of Æsculapians might discover a disease isn't making people sick in a remote town but a toxic environment. Even if they can find the source, can they stop it? What if they must engage with a local government or shut down a factory to save their patients? If the Æsculapians won't speak for this isolated enclave, who will?

In another scenario, maybe a patient has been deliberately poisoned or infected. They claim some conspiracy is after them, and nobody can be trusted, and then they lapse into a coma. Æsculapians are rarely investigative sorts, but who else can the characters trust to unravel the conspiracy?

For something simpler, maybe a patient's condition evades easy diagnosis, even via Kirlian Eye. Uncovering what's wrong with them may require tracing their movements or investigating their home lives. The solution doesn't have to be anything unearthly, it just needs to present a puzzle for the characters to solve. The story should be more than Medicine rolls in operating rooms or Might rolls to lift a collapsed ceiling.

Before engaging in a larger story that's outside the usual Æsculapian wheelhouse, make sure to talk with the players about expectations. You don't want a group entirely comprised of specialized neurosurgeons investigating a conspiracy any more than you want a group of Augendis-maxed firefighters thrown into an elaborate drama about hospital politics.

## INSPIRED IN ACTION

While the Æsculapian specialty is vitakinesis it's important to ensure the docs don't accidentally hog the spotlight. A Storyguide should familiarize themselves with the limitations on Iatrosis, what it can and can't treat, and how often a given character can afford to blow their psi pool for Adjust Template. Most people should need mundane medical treatments to recover from illness or injury. There are still plenty of options to throw medical mysteries at an Æsculapian that can't be noetically handwaved away without repeatedly going back to the well of Quantum Flux Diseases.

This also means psions of other Aptitudes need their spotlight as well. Obvious applications of this principle would be Technokinesis applied to difficult equipment or Telekinesis used for clinic security. Other Aptitudes' Modes can easily be given medical applications, such as Electromanipulation to improvise a defibrillator or Thermokinesis to warm someone up or cool them down.

Similarly, Talents are meant to stand out. They thrive under the pressure medical and rescue workers face daily. Even without obvious 'powers,' these are your world-class doctors, your impossible ambulance pilots, and the security escort who surprisingly turns out to be a match for the attacking mutant.

One pitfall to avoid is overuse of Dramatic Editing in a scarce resource scenario. If the group is completely stumped on how to replace equipment or supplies, it's perfectly fine for a Talent to 'discover' a mislabeled crate in a warehouse or peel off a sticker to find the medicine's expiration date is *next* year. It's best to avoid that becoming standard operating procedure. Few groups find it fun to resolve every plot by watching one player spend points of their personal finite resource. After the first time a group has to solve a problem with Dramatic Editing, consider changing things up.

Fortunately, a little bit of preparation can avoid this issue. Before starting your campaign, look at your roster of characters and come up with one or two possible challenges particularly suited for each of them. Keep that list handy, and make sure to only use each scenario once. If a story is going a little too easily or your players do something brilliant and resolve an 'of the week' plot halfway through the session, feel free to glance at that list and drop something in as a surprise complication to keep things interesting.

# NEW PATHS AND EDGES

The Order has a wide variety of skills and specialties to draw from, and below are some paths and edges reflecting what they can bring into the field or the lab.

## ÆSCULAPIAN RESEARCHER (SOCIETY)

While every Æsculapian is dedicated to saving humanity, your character does their part in brightly-lit labs and clinics rather than shadow-casting rubble. While they're as capable as other members of the Order at fieldwork, they're more comfortable in sterile environments. They were probably a doctor or a researcher before joining the Order. For your character, the 'front line' is the research lab or the operating room.

**Path Concepts:** Brilliant but acerbic epidemiologist, visionary scientist, young prodigy of a medical dynasty, dedicated cure-seeker

**Example Connections:** Orgosoft developer, Triton Division researcher, research hospital administration, pharmaceutical executive

**Skills:** Enigmas, Medicine, Science, Technology

**Edges:** Favored Mode, Library, Lightning Calculator, Patron, Photographic Memory, Speed Reading, Weak Spots

## UNEINGESCHRÄNKTE NOTHILFE (SOCIETY)

Your character is one of the 'Unrestricted,' who use skills developed under less-honorable circumstances to deliver medicine and people beyond political blockades and similar obstructions. They can negotiate the return of medical supplies intercepted by organized crime or sneak a doctor into a corporate work camp. Being named Uneingeschränkte isn't a title, but recognition of a skillset with a unique place in the Æsculapian mission.

**Path Concepts:** Former mercenary seeking redemption, burned spy, psiad passing for psion, fugitive criminal hiding out

**Example Connections:** Underworld Merchant, Resistance Group, Retired Former Colleague, Guerilla Journalist

**Skills:** Enigmas, Larceny, Medicine, Survival

**Edges:** Adrenaline Spike, Always Prepared, Covert (• to ••), Danger Sense, Dual Citizenship, Geopolitical Awareness, Hardy (• to ••), Rapid Response Protocols, Safe House, Skilled Liar, Weak Spots

## RESCUE PILOT (ROLE)

You feel a need for speed. Whether inspired by the urge to rescue people or using it as an outlet for adrenaline addiction, you're most at home screaming down a highway or through airspace in a barely-controlled vehicle. You're one of the stars of the rescue stations, racing death every day. You can drive or fly just about anything, and eagerly do so to save lives.

**Path Concepts:** Gearhead with a hero complex, former drag racer, altruistic adrenaline junkie, stunt driver

**Example Connections:** Vehicle forums, Underground racers, ER doctors, Street cops

**Skills:** Athletics, Medicine, Pilot, Technology

**Edges:** Adrenaline Spike, Artifact (• to •••), Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Engine Expert (**Mission Statements**), Hair Trigger Reflexes, Ms. Fix It, Safe Transport (p. 31)

# NEW EDGES

### FORCED FLEXIBILITY (••)

**Prerequisite:** Medicine 3

Whether they're the only doctor of a small ship crew, a traveling medic wandering the wastes, or stranded in an extrasolar settlement, your character must improvise and work outside their training. Your character may use improvised equipment for Medicine rolls without penalty and receives 1 Enhancement to non-Medicine rolls where their medical training may be a factor (such as Empathy for counseling or Technology to repair or improvise medical equipment).

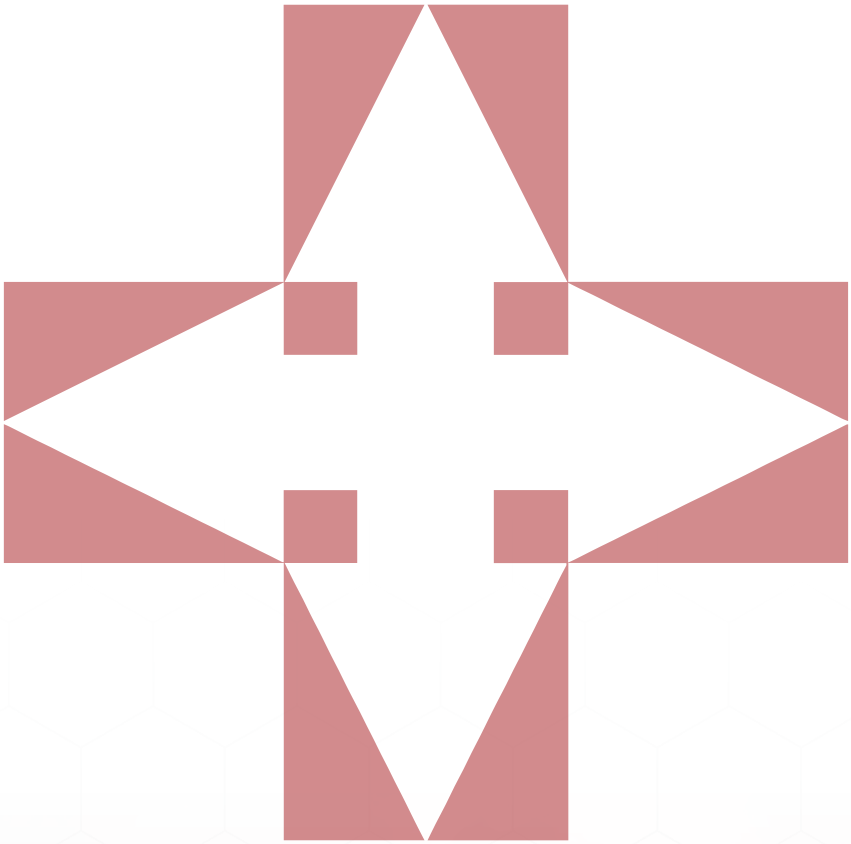
### GEOPOLITICAL AWARENESS (•)

Your character keeps up on the state of the world. Without needing to roll or do research, they always have up-to-date information on national borders and territory. They also know who's officially in charge of a given area, and at the Storyguide's discretion may know whether that person is a figurehead. If circumstances make it impossible for them to have this information, then they have an easy and reliable source of knowledge to fill in gaps.

### SAFE TRANSPORT (• TO •••)

**Prerequisite:** Pilot 3

Whether by land, sea, air, or space, your character can pilot a vehicle into and out of difficult situations and smooth out a rough ride. For each dot your character possesses in this edge, they may reduce a Complication or Difficulty by 1 for any attempts to administer medical attention to patients being transported. This doesn't lessen or eliminate obstacles but allows the pilot/driver to mitigate their effect on patients inside. At Storyguide's discretion, this bonus may also apply to other actions involving fine manipulation, such as disarming a bomb or repairing equipment on board the vehicle.



CHAPTER TWO
CHITRA BHANU

"You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it."
— Maya Angelou

In 2111 the other psi orders destroyed Chitra Bhanu, and to everyone beyond a few survivors, that's where the quantakinetics' story ended. However, for the order's proxy, Dr. S.K. Bhurano, and the approximately thirty other survivors she either took with her or located over the next few years, the Chitra Bhanu purge was the death of the old Chitra Bhanu, but also the birth of a new order of the same name. With the help of the Norça proxy, the regrown quantakinesis Prometheus Chamber became active in 2122, and since Chitra Bhanu has been slowly and carefully recruiting new initiates.

However, despite having the same person in charge, and most of the order's members being quantakinetics, the new Chitra Bhanu is considerably different from the old psi order. Naturally, one element of this difference is Chitra Bhanu is now a secret organization working from the shadows. However, the changes go far deeper. While Dr. S.K. Bhurano remains proxy, she is no longer possessed by and under the control of one of the Doyen, so this is, at long last, *her* psi order, and not one run by an alien intelligence who saw humans as potentially useful but dangerous tools.

Chitra Bhanu is still an order primarily composed of scientists who seek to use their intellects and their powers to better understand the cosmos and its many mysteries. However, Dr. Bhurano replaced their previous emphasis on noetic theory with an imperative that members of her order focus their research on one or more immediate problems and threats facing humanity. Most Chitra Bhanu are scientists, and not engineers or technicians, but they are studying mysteries and unusual phenomena that either, like the Doyen, pose an immediate threat to humanity, or might be used to aid humanity in its struggle against the Aberrants, the Chromatics, the Coalition, or the Doyen. Before the 2111 purge, Chitra Bhanu focused on studying noetic science in the laboratory. Dr. Bhurano has shifted this emphasis to field science, where order members study various phenomena out in the world. This change has made a few of the older members uncomfortable, since most strongly prefer working in the laboratory.

More than two centuries old, Dr. Bhurano remembers the early days of the Æon Society, when a small number of powered individuals set out to change the world. While the early 22nd century is very different from the 1920s, and Chitra Bhanu is very different from the Æon Society, she wants to recapture some of the brilliance and daring of that organization and apply it to unearthing the mysteries and solving the problems facing humanity.

The previous psi order was exceptionally hierarchical, as the Doyen who controlled Dr. Bhurano supervised all research and assigned all projects. It forbade members from using order facilities and equipment for their own projects, unless the Doyen approved such projects, which it rarely did. Also, unlike the other proxies, it refused to allow other psi orders access to the quantakinesis Prometheus Chamber and did not permit members to travel outside the solar system.

Now she is free from alien control, Dr. Bhurano is attempting to give all members of her psi order the same freedom. While she insists on reviewing all new projects, members are free to suggest projects they wish to work on, and unless there is either an urgent necessity for these individuals to do something else, or she can see that the project is too dangerous or unlikely to succeed, she approves. Except in the case of particularly urgent projects, or a team of Chitra Bhanu researchers needing the assistance of other members, she only assigns projects if an individual or team specifically asks her for an assignment.

While she would like to keep track of every member's activity and location, Dr. Bhurano also vividly remembers how the Doyen who possessed her insisted on constant monitoring of the other members of the order. As a result, she works to encourage independence among all Chitra Bhanu members. She expects the members of her psi order to be self-directed and looks forward to seeing the results of the various projects members pursue.

For now, Chitra Bhanu is growing relatively slowly. In addition to the difficulty of finding psions with the strong latency required for quantakinesis, Dr. S.K. Bhurano also knows secrecy must be her

## THE QUANTAKINESIS PROMETHEUS CHAMBER

The Chitra Bhanu Prometheus Chamber is currently located in the Venezuela Blight Zone Research Center (see **Mission Statements**, for more on this facility), beneath the Plaguelands. Norça built and maintains this facility, and outside of the members of Chitra Bhanu, its existence is known only to proxy del Fuego, a few of his most trusted advisors, and the Norça personnel who work there. Dr. Bhurano is troubled that her only method of creating new quantakinetics effectively belongs to Norça. She also understands the profound debt she owes to proxy del Fuego, and is exceedingly grateful for his assistance uncovering the truth about the Doyen and their activities both on and off Earth.

Currently, Dr. Bhurano and the other senior Chitra Bhanu personnel are investigating options for where to move their Prometheus Chamber. For the moment, the facility beneath the Plaguelands remains considerably more secret and secure than anything they could manage on their own. Currently, their best alternative is to build a base on a small asteroid, but Dr. Bhurano is reluctant to use any facility the requires a teleporter to secretly access. The only other viable suggestion is an undersea facility which order members would primarily travel to via one or more jump rings (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, p. 295) located in Chitra Bhanu safe houses.

Prior to the 2111 purge, the possessed Dr. Bhurano paid little attention to the Prometheus legend that served as the basis for the device's name, but the actual Dr. Bhurano now regularly talks about how these devices will allow humanity to steal the false gods' (meaning the Doyen) fire.

foremost concern. As a result, she rejects most potential quantakinetics before they ever learn Chitra Bhanu still exists because the telepaths or clears in Chitra Bhanu deem the prospective recruit insufficiently careful or trustworthy.

However, the reason there were less than 150 quantakinetics in the old Chitra Bhanu was the Doyen feared them. While they wished to explore this strange and potentially deadly (to them) power, they wished to make certain there were a limited amount of these psions. The creature possessing Dr. Bhurano kept numbers down by claiming to be exceptionally selective in who she allowed to become a quantakinetic. For now, proxy Bhurano needs to keep the number of quantakinetics low to preserve the order's secrecy, but she plans to gradually expand and dreams of an order containing several thousand quantakinetics united to defeat the Doyen, weaken Aberrants, cure Sub-Aberrant mutants, and probe the mysteries of the cosmos.

# STRUCTURE, ORGANIZATION, & SUPPORT

Chitra Bhanu's organizational structure is exceptionally simple. Their headquarters is the Venezuela Blight Zone Research Center, which is where the order's primary laboratories are located. This is also the primary location for the order's research into Quantum Flux. 15 of the order's roughly 70 members live and work here, including Dr. Bhurano.

Rosalinda Benfeldt, the order's sole teleporter is also stationed at their headquarters and enforces regular drills where she has every Chitra Bhanu member in the facility practice getting ready to travel through a portal to one of dozens of safe houses. As a result of these drills, every Chita Bhanu member is ready to travel with all their data and any equipment they cannot easily replace within eight minutes. They have even worked out how to rapidly move their Prometheus Chamber. While not tested yet, the noetic technicians who operate the Prometheus Chamber believe the chamber could be safely transported even if someone was submerged. While they believe the occupant would survive, they are uncertain. They also fear that transporting the chamber with someone inside would seriously damage the individual's noetic powers.

One of the biggest challenges the revived Chitra Bhanu has faced is the transformation from a research-focused organization primarily composed of scientists, to one dependent upon extreme secrecy

for its continued existence. Surviving members have had to learn a variety of espionage tradecraft techniques, including dead drops, codes using one-time pads, and the reorganization of Chitra Bhanu into a series of semi-independent cells reporting to Dr. Bhurano and her inner circle. While Dr. Bhurano's several centuries of life have given her experience with secrecy, she had never run a clandestine organization before. Most other survivors have little experience with espionage or the type of secrecy required for covert activities. As a result, while Dr. Bhurano insists all recruits possess a moderate degree of scientific literacy, she is starting to recruit non-scientists, and seeks new recruits experienced in espionage, secrecy, and undercover work.

She also reorganized members of her psi order into cells of between three and eight members. Each cell reports directly to Dr. Bhurano or another senior member of their headquarters. Members of each cell have no contact information for members of other cells, and all contact between cells is either routed through headquarters or carefully anonymized. The purpose of this separation is to ensure if members of a cell are captured, they cannot reveal the identities or location of other Chitra Bhanu members.

Shortly after Dr. Bhurano began working with the Norça proxy, he asked two of his closest lieutenants to instruct all Chitra Bhanu personnel in the basics of espionage tradecraft. Now that the order's Prometheus Chamber has regrown, all new Chitra Bhanu recruits receive this same security training, including recruits who lack the latency required for quantakinesis. For them, proxy del Fuego uses the Norça reciprocity agreement to allow these individuals to make use of both the biokinetic Prometheus Chamber and the other orders' Prometheus Chambers.

Chitra Bhanu supports its cells in a variety of ways, including the near certainty of teleportation rescue if they are in sufficiently desperate straits. All teams have multiple ways to call for help, including memorized emergency codes sent via OpNet messages, telepathy, and one of the order's several skilled clears monitoring a cell when they undertake a particularly dangerous mission.

One major limitation is the order's cellular structure means while multiple teams can work on one project, they must do so without ever meeting or physically working together. Senior Chitra Bhanu personnel relay messages between different cells. If different cells require closer cooperation they can communicate over secure and tightly encrypted OpNet channels. They must do so using software to disguise their appearance, location, voice, and movements, meaning cells can only communicate with each other using stylized cartoony avatars that bear no relation to the people they represent.

In addition to the secrecy and its small size, there is another important difference between Chitra Bhanu and the other psi orders, nearly all members are psions. Most members of the other psi orders are neutrals. Most neutrals in the other psi orders act as support staff, clerks, and other essential mundane positions. Chitra Bhanu is simultaneously too small to require much in the way of support staff, and too secretive to be able to make effective use of them. Instead, more than three quarters of the members of Chitra Bhanu are psions, and the only neutrals are exceptional individuals whose brilliance and dedication sufficiently impressed Dr. Bhurano that she covertly recruited them. One result of applying her high standards to all new Chitra Bhanu members is she has the highest percentage of Talents as members of any psi order. Of the 18 neutrals who now belong to Chitra Bhanu, eight are Talents. Dr. Bhurano has only the vaguest understanding of what Talents are, but she knows that the neutrals who are part of her psi order are just as exceptional as its psions.

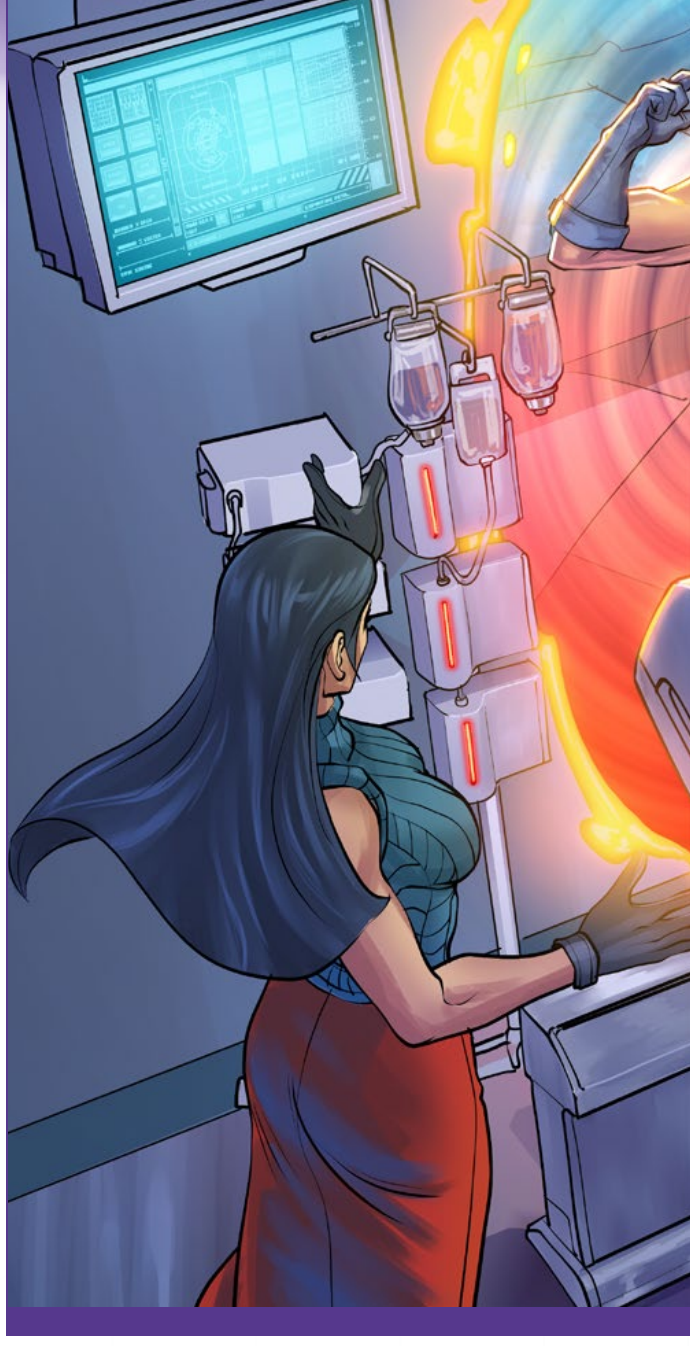
# TOPICS UNDER INVESTIGATION

The new Chitra Bhanu is dedicated to exploring various dangerous and potentially dangerous or useful mysteries found in the Trinity Continuum. However, the order focuses much of its efforts on the Doyen. Dr. Bhurano is passionately devoted to learning more about the mysterious Doyen. She focuses on finding ways to easily detect their presence without exposing the quantakinetic, especially when a Doyen is possessing someone. She also spends significant time testing methods to defend against them, and if possible, destroy them.

While Dr. Bhurano and the other noetic researchers in Chitra Bhanu find the Doyen fascinating, Dr. Bhurano also hates them with a deep and abiding passion, both for possessing her, and for causing the death of most members of her psi order. As a result,

## HIDDEN HUNTERS

Seeking to learn more about the Doyen, including ways of destroying them, is far from safe. The Doyen are exceedingly powerful, they can possess humans, including both psions and important officials. They possess a wide range of potent noetic powers, and they are paranoid cowards who do not hesitate to eliminate potential threats. However, Chitra Bhanu have one advantage, the Doyen think Dr. Bhurano, and the other quantakinetics are dead. Even the mighty Doyen have great difficulty penetrating quantakinetics' *Psi Cloak* basic power. In addition, quantakinetics can detect Doyen possessing someone using their *Subquantum Sense*. However, doing this requires them to use their powers within Attunement range of the Doyen, which risks the Doyen detecting the psion. For the moment, the Doyen have not noticed Chitra Bhanu members are watching them, but this could change if any members of this psi order become careless in the presence of one of these creatures.



her interest in the Doyen is exceedingly personal. While she attempts to keep her profound hatred of these creatures from negatively influencing her plans or research, she would love to help destroy all Doyen who aren't willing to leave humanity alone.

Unfortunately, Earth and Luna are both quite populous and there are usually fewer than a dozen Doyen present. As a result, finding them is a challenge. So far, the most successful approach has been for quantakinetics whose attunement range is relatively long to use *Subquantum Sense* in locations where important people gather hoping to discover one or more people whom the Doyen have possessed. Chitra Bhanu's efforts in this regard have yielded a modest payoff. They have located seven people who the Doyen have possessed, but follow-ups on them have revealed, apart from Dr. Bhurano, Doyen rarely possess someone for more than a week or two, and most possessions last between a few hours and a few days.

Because she has shared her findings with the Norça proxy and the Norça personnel at the Venezuela Blight Zone Research Center, a small team of Chitra Bhanu and Norça researchers are working to create a bioapp capable of detecting Doyen, or at minimum, detecting Doyen who are possessing humans. Such a bioapp would allow quantakinetics who are using *Psi Cloak* to hide their powers to still detect the Doyen, greatly reducing the chance the Doyen might notice these quantakinetic spies. This device would also allow other psions to detect the Doyen, something proxy del Fuego strongly wants. Progress on a bioapp to detect possession has been slow but seems nearly complete. Initial prototypes should be field-tested soon. However, both Dr. Bhurano and proxy del Fuego also want a device to detect Doyen when they are not possessing someone. Work on this project moves slowly, and the researchers believe the best and fastest way to accomplish this goal is

for someone to capture a Doyen to study. As a result, capturing one of the Doyen has become one of Dr. Bhurano's primary goals.

While the Doyen are very much the focus of the new Chitra Bhanu, other cells continue research on improved methods for reducing Corruption in Quantum Flux Zones, helping people with Quantum Flux Diseases, and curing sub-Aberrant mutants. Because of the necessity of keeping the existence of quantakinetics secret, research has focused on ways to cure people with Corruption diseases and sub-Aberrant mutants using techniques without requiring the presence of a quantakinetic. So far, their only success has been the development of Corruption reducing injections (p. 177), which only remain stable for a short time.

Work reducing Corruption in Quantum Flux Zones has also been slow, but collaboration between Chitra Bhanu and Norça researchers in the Venezuela Blight Zone Research Center is going well. Currently, these scientists and noetic bioengineers are working to create large self-mobile bioapps to crawl over Corrupted land and "digest" its Quantum Flux (see the flux eater, p. 178). Prototypes are undergoing testing and while more limited than

## WHAT DOES DR. BHURANO KNOW ABOUT THE DOYEN?

Most people possessed by the Doyen remember little or nothing about what happened when someone else was in control of their body. S.K. Bhurano is not most people. She had periods of awareness, where she was helpless to act, but could perceive what was going on around her. Because Mindshare was one of her Auxiliary Modes, she was also able to catch glimpses of the thoughts of the Doyen who possessed her. As a result, she knows the Doyen are an exceptionally ancient and paranoid species, they regard humanity as a potential threat to "tame" or destroy, their bodies are noetically stabilized plasma, and humanity is far from the first species they have neutralized.

She is unaware of their efforts to control the Chromatics or the Qin but would be unsurprised by either revelation. If she heard descriptions of the arrival and actions of the entities the Chromatics worship as the "Bodiless Ones" she would strongly suspect they were referring to the Doyen.

Dr. Bhurano also possesses the same knowledge the other proxies do. The Doyen provided the eight proxies with their Prometheus Chambers, and claimed to be doing this to help humanity fight the Aberrants.

members of both psi orders hoped, they do offer some Corruption reduction.

The order's final major project is both relatively long term and considerably more personal than the others — Dr. Bhurano wishes to clear Chitra Bhanu's name. Unfortunately, this is a somewhat tricky proposition. Explaining what happened during the 2111 purge either requires a series of carefully constructed lies or revealing the involvement of the Doyen. Also, she and the other survivors of the purge understand if they were able to clear their names, if they went public, the Doyen would immediately target them. Currently, the best plan anyone in Chitra Bhanu can devise is covertly revealing themselves to the other proxies, while also revealing the existence of the Doyen and the necessity for absolute secrecy. This would require avoiding publicly revealing the truth about either Chitra Bhanu or the Doyen, until Dr. Bhurano and the other proxies are ready to move against these creatures.

Within the past month, Dr. Bhurano has been uncovered hints that Ministry proxy Rebecca Bue Li is suffering from a potentially fatal Corruption disease. While both the Ministry's secrecy and the unfortunate history between China and India in the last days of the Aberrant War (see **Terra Firma**, p. 42) meant relations between Chitra Bhanu and the Ministry were never close, Dr. Bhurano sees proxy Bue Li's illness a possible way to change her mind about Chitra Bhanu. Only a combination of quantakinesis and vitakinesis can cure proxy Bue Li. Dr. Bhurano is planning for a quantakinetic to either use the Fundamentals powers *Drain* or *Transference* on her or secretly give her a dose of the recently developed Corruption reducing injection (p. 177). From there, one of the vitakinetics treating her or perhaps even one of the several vitakinetics in Chitra Bhanu will need to heal her.

At this point, one or more quantakinetics could then reveal themselves and would allow her to read their minds and learn the truth about both Chitra Bhanu and the Doyen. Dr. Bhurano hopes if this plan works, proxy Bue Li would be willing to covertly support Chitra Bhanu's efforts and begin a secretive campaign of telepaths spying on and monitoring the Doyen on Earth. Also, Dr. Bhurano believes the Doyen's fear of Corruption will keep them from attempting to possess, or even spend time in close proximity to proxy Bue Li, so she feels there's little risk of their noticing this contact.

Dr. Bhurano is also working with other members of Chitra Bhanu to reveal the order's existence to Otha Herzog. Proxy del Fuego informed her several months ago that Otha Herzog has been seriously questioning the events surrounding the 2111 purge. He also believes proxy Herzog has been discussing his suspicions with the recently returned Upeo wa Macho proxy Bolade Atwan. Dr. Bhurano would love to have the assistance of both proxies in her effort to both redeem Chitra Bhanu's reputation and to uncover intel on the mysterious Doyen. She is working out plans to have a Chitra Bhanu cell contact one or both proxies and reveal the truth. In actuality, proxy Herzog and a handful of ISRA members already know Chitra Bhanu still exists (see p. 56). No one outside of this small group knows this, and even Otha Herzog is unaware of the threat the Doyen pose to humanity or what they did to Dr. Bhurano.

In addition to these three major projects, Chitra Bhanu cells are investigating a variety of other mysteries, including the Gorgon Karst (**Terra Firma**, p. 122),

the Shennongjia quarantine district (**Terra Firma**, p. 148), and the Lambent Chancel (**Terra Firma**, p. 131). Dr. Bhurano has also heard rumors about the Breach (**Under Alien Skies**, p. 111) and the Taniwha of Rohe (**Under Alien Skies**, p. 140). She hopes to soon gain access to a small jump ship or additional teleporters and a spacecraft with a teleportational helm. As soon as she achieve either objective, she plans to send a team to investigate both mysteries and examine the ruins of several alien worlds for evidence of Doyen involvement and more intelligence on them, and on other extrasolar threats facing humanity.

# A SMALL CIRCLE OF ALLIES

Chitra Bhanu's closest ally is psi order Norça, or more specifically proxy Giuseppe del Fuego and a few dozen members of his organization he trusts completely. Proxy del Fuego greatly regrets his orders' involvement in the 2111 purge and is especially angry the Doyen easily manipulated him and his people. Dr. Bhurano understands this betrayal by the Doyen all too well and both trusts and personally likes proxy del Fuego. However, she is also wary of depending too much on anyone outside her small organization. As a result, while she shares the shreds of information she has obtained about the Doyen with proxy del Fuego, she keeps the location of the few remaining Chitra Bhanu safe houses and the details of their current and ongoing missions secret from everyone outside her order. Del Fuego both understands and respects this, since both proxies understand their first responsibility is to protect and defend the members of their psi order.

For the moment, the only other allies Chitra Bhanu have are some members of the Æon Trinity. Currently, their contacts are limited to a few Section Minerva personnel, and three members of the Æon Council who work closely with Section Minerva. Like proxy del Fuego, these three know about Dr. Bhurano's possession by the Doyen and see these creatures as a serious threat to humanity.

The cooperation between Section Minerva and Chitra Bhanu is very much a two-way street. Section Minerva operatives occasionally work with Chitra Bhanu cells and two recently created quantakinetics

## DETECTING THE DOYEN

Finding ways to detect a Doyen possessing someone is one of the most important tasks Chitra Bhanu members are exploring. Because a reliable Doyen detector hasn't been built yet, there remain three methods to determine if the Doyen is possessing someone. Psychometry can detect if the person who touched an object was possessed, Mindshare can scan someone's mind and determine if there is a second consciousness in their mind. Quantakinetics' *Subquantum Sense* can instantly determine if anyone or anything is using *Possession* on a target. The first two approaches are somewhat limited because Doyen can use the Psycholocation power *Dowsing* to attempt to hide from noetic detection. Also, even when successful, scanning the mind of someone possessed by a Doyen is likely to alert the Doyen that someone is using telepathy on them. The Doyen will usually attempt to telepathically conceal their presence or attempt to eliminate the telepathic intruder.

However, *Subquantum Sense* looks for powers not individuals. Although further examination is necessary to determine if one of the Doyen is actually possessing an individual, the fact someone is possessed is always worth knowing. Also, Ministry operatives and freelance psions are almost never willing to possess senior Æon Trinity personnel or other powerful individuals in one of the other psi orders.

Telepaths can use the *Mindscan* Mode to detect the Doyen, but the Doyen can easily detect telepathic scans and extensively use Psychbending to avoid detection. In addition, the biokinesis power *Biosense* can theoretically detect them, but the Doyen's exotic plasma-based biology is difficult to detect, and biokinetics must spend at least a few minutes using *Biosense* to detect a Doyen. As a result, widespread training would require the presence of a cooperative or captured Doyen. Proxy del Fuego is eager to capture a Doyen so more of his people can train themselves to detect these creatures.

are members of Section Minerva. Their records list one as a freelance psychokinetic and the other as a freelance electrokinetic. Only the three members of Æon Council and the members of their Section Minerva teams know the truth about these two psions.

Two quantakinetic members of Chitra Bhanu are crew on the Æon Trinity's Leviathan jump ship, the *Rosalind Franklin*. The Æon Council have given this vessel's crew a top secret mission to investigate the Doyen. The two quantakinetics are listed as Æon Trinity personnel, but the ship's small crew know they are quantakinetics, and that plasma-based aliens called the Doyen caused the 2111 purge of Chitra Bhanu. However, no one onboard, excluding the two quantakinetics, know Dr. Bhurano survived, that the quantakinetic Prometheus Chamber is again operational, or anything else about the revived Chitra Bhanu.

The members of the Æon Council have been subtly and carefully working to reveal the truth to other senior Æon Trinity personnel, while also doing their best to keep their activities secret from the Doyen. Quantakinesis is uniquely suited for detecting Doyen and the Æon Council members who know about the Doyen regularly employ the services of Æon Trinity psions with quantakinesis Auxiliary Modes to scan people at important meetings. They then follow-up with a clear using Psychometry to provide a further check after the meeting. These efforts have so far only detected one Doyen, who the three Æon Council members are feeding misinformation.

While most people still firmly believe Chitra Bhanu was working with Aberrants, there are some notable exceptions. Some continue to openly defend Chitra Bhanu both in person and, more commonly, on the OpNet. The majority of these individuals were either patients quantakinetics cured of Quantum Flux diseases or their families. Some of them despair stating the psi order could have done so much good but instead turned inexplicably evil. Most deeply regret the loss of these psions and openly speculate the order's destruction might have been a terrible mistake or misunderstanding.

Some people who have studied quantakinesis speculate that because quantakinesis can be a powerful tool to locate and weaken Aberrants, it's possible one or more powerful Aberrants manipulated public opinion and the minds and emotions of the other psi orders who arrived in Mumbai and caused them to distrust Chitra Bhanu. This continues to be a small but persistent conspiracy theory, backed up by numerous reports from the Nova Era and Aberrant War of powerful Aberrants warping and twisting people's thoughts, emotions, and loyalties using various forms of Quantum-fueled brainwashing.

While Dr. Bhurano forbids any order member from revealing she is still alive or the quantakinesis Prometheus Chamber still exists, rumors of surviving quantakinetics persist. Some quantakinetics are also semi-openly using their powers to help cure Quantum Flux diseases. If the patient seems receptive, the quantakinetic may mention they are a quantakinetic and Chitra Bhanu was not working with Aberrants. In almost all cases, a telepath or clear examines the person or situation first and decides if revealing even this crumb of truth is safe. These people remain grateful to the quantakinetic who aided them, and a number have been working to carefully investigate the events of the 2111 purge and to plant seeds of doubt about its reasons on forums across the OpNet.

Although quantakinetics have only managed to cure a few hundred people of Quantum Flux diseases and have revealed themselves to only around a quarter of those, these people are all exceptionally grateful and their comments on the OpNet have served to slightly decrease the number of people who believe Chitra Bhanu were traitors to humanity who got what they deserved. In addition, several of these individuals have aided Chitra Bhanu teams who required assistance. When they reveal themselves to an individual, Chitra Bhanu teams also ask if they can call upon this person for help, and so far, everyone they have asked has agreed.

The revived Chitra Bhanu are in an odd and somewhat precarious position as the order has a large number of potential enemies, none of whom know they still exist. Its most important and dangerous foe are obviously the Doyen. The members of Chitra Bhanu, along with proxy del Fuego and their other allies in Norça and the Æon Trinity, know far more about the Doyen and the threat they represent than anyone else. If the Doyen learned both Dr. Bhurano and a fair number of the other members of Chitra Bhanu were still alive and investigating the Doyen and recruiting others to help, the Doyen would either kill them or use their powers to convince others to kill them.

Chitra Bhanu personnel take security seriously, verging on paranoia due to their fear of the Doyen. Proxy del Fuego and Norça personnel who know the truth have little trouble with this level of caution, because senior members of psi order Norça were already exceptionally security conscious, and members of the Æon Council are equally skilled in this regard. However, the only member of Chitra Bhanu who already possessed the right mixture of experience and justified paranoia was S.K. Bhurano. She and proxy del Fuego have had to train the other members of Chitra Bhanu in the basics of covert operations.

Aside from the Doyen, the members of Chitra Bhanu who survived the purge see two other major enemies — proxies Solveig Larssen and Alex Cassel. Both actively participated in the 2111 purge. Reports from Dr. Bhurano's contacts within both Norça and the Æon Trinity indicate neither proxy has doubts that they did the right thing and Chitra Bhanu was indeed in league with Aberrants. Dr. Bhurano correctly believes the Doyen helped reshape their attitudes toward the quantakinetic order. Nevertheless, she and the purge survivors are disinclined to trust or approach anyone in either order until they have the backing of most or all the other proxies, and possibly not even then. Members of Chitra Bhanu also diligently avoid the rank and file of both orders.

The governments of most of Earth's nations and the general public also consider Chitra Bhanu to have been Aberrant-loving traitors to humanity. As a result, even if they could convince all seven proxies of the truth and deal with the threat posed by the Doyen, they would still need to find a way to convince everyone else that they weren't allied with inhuman monsters. Dr. Bhurano is keenly aware that if the truth about the Doyen becomes public, in addition to this possibly causing the Doyen to attempt to destroy humanity, this revelation could kickstart a massive wave of anti-psion backlash. Many people would then associate psions with secretive monsters who could covertly possess anyone and who regularly commit genocide against any species they consider too dangerous.

Since several large and powerful governments like Nippon and the FSA already distrust psions, and various prominent anti-psion organizations, like Monolith (see the **Æon Æxpansion**, p. 102) already exist. The possibility of revelations about the Doyen triggering a wave of anti-psion sentiment seems far too possible. One reason Dr. Bhurano wishes to make an alliance with both proxy Bue Li and proxy Herzog is to engage their help in finding a way to reveal the truth about the Doyen to humanity in a manner that reduces serious negative consequences. Both the Ministry and ISRA could be exceptionally helpful in this endeavor.

## CHITRA BHANU SECURITY PROTOCOLS

While most Chibs are relatively certain no outsider will find the Venezuela Blight Zone Research Center without some form of security breach, members of the various Chitra Bhanu cells are regularly out in public, where one of the Doyen, or even another psion, might read their mind or otherwise use their powers to discover quantakinetics still walk among them. As a result, all new members are drilled in a variety of security protocols. Quantakinetics operating in public or otherwise interacting with any non-allied outsider should always use *Psi Cloak* to disguise the fact they are quantakinetics, and if doing so is practical, to also disguise the fact they are psions. In addition, security personnel train members to regularly use *Subquantum Sense* or, if not available, Psychometry or Mindshare to periodically ensure the Doyen are not possessing either a member of the cell or the people they are interacting with.

Members who are monitoring Doyen activity or interacting with human telepaths are issued psionic masks (see p. 178). Dr. Bhurano is working to manufacture enough of these bioapps for every member to wear constantly.

# IMPORTANT PEOPLE

## DR. S.K. BHURANO

The order's proxy, Dr. S.K. Bhurano was born at the end of the 19th century and was one of several people empowered by the Hammersmith Experiment in the 1920s. Since that time, she has been hiding, studying noetic powers, and periodically reinventing herself to avoid revealing her immortality. A Doyen possessed her from 2104 until the 2111 purge. While aware of much that happened during her possession, every word she said and every action she took during these seven years was performed by the Doyen. Since her freedom, she has chosen a policy of radical honesty with every member of her order. In addition to explaining about the Doyen and being possessed, she also revealed her immortality and that her 2104 experiments with noetic energy reduced the size of Quantum Flux Zones across the planet and may have been responsible for inducing psionic latency in many people.

Members of the order who knew her prior to the purge describe her now as kinder and more personable, as well as slightly more intelligent, and considerably more driven. She cares deeply about the members of her psi order and is determined to do her absolute best to help humanity survive and fulfill its destiny. She hates the Doyen with a fiery passion that surprises everyone familiar with the cold and somewhat distant demeanor she displayed while possessed, and the quiet calm she normally displays now.

Dr. Bhurano was able to perceive just enough of the thoughts of the creature who possessed her to know the Doyen are divided in their attitude about humanity. Some wish to control and "tame" them, while others see humanity as too dangerous to be allowed to exist. Dr. Bhurano seeks to thwart both aims and dreams of eliminating the Doyen threat.

Although she does her best to conceal it, Dr. S.K. Bhurano is traumatized by her time possessed. She carefully avoids talking or even thinking about her mental imprisonment. After several years of therapy with an order telepath, she is finally able to sleep without constant nightmares. She also avoids restrictive physical environments and conversations where she feels trapped, as they fill her with existential dread.

During the first few years post-purge, she avoided sleeping, if at all possible, even using chemical or psionic tools to keep herself awake. During this time she developed a habit of wild late night discussions of theoretical science and philosophy with other members of her order. While she sleeps more peacefully now, she still makes time for such sessions at least once a week. Any order member at the Venezuela facility is welcome to attend. Topics range from noetic evolution to discussions of the ethics of sentient biotech, or possible evidence of novas or psiads in different historical eras. While purely informal, there is widespread agreement by members of the order to keep one topic strictly off limits during these discussions – the Doyen. Everyone who knows her can see talking about them makes Dr. Bhurano both upset and tense.

Like proxy del Fuego, Dr. Bhurano meets with every new order member. The new Chitra Bhanu is so small and secretive she is in regular contact with most members who are not undercover or outside the solar system. While she has spent significant time holed up in Venezuela Blight Zone Research Center, she now leaves regularly. One of the Norça biokinetics assists her order's vitakinetics to provide her with an impenetrable disguise, she wears a psychic mask (p. 178), and carries an excellent fake ID provided to her by proxy del Fuego. She usually confines these excursions to cities in Sudamérica, but has visited the Bharati Commonwealth twice during the last three years. Each time she travels beyond Sudamérica, she keeps in regularly contact with teleporter Rosalinda Benfeldt, and avoids Mumbai, in case the Doyen still monitor the ruins of her former headquarters.

## ROSALINDA BENFELDT

All senior Chitra Bhanu personnel are survivors of the 2111 purge. One of the most vital is Rosalinda Benfeldt, the order's lone teleporter. She only joined Chitra Bhanu and became a teleporter in 2109. Rosalinda vividly understands her services are vital to the order. She helped Dr. Bhurano and others escape the explosion that destroyed their original headquarters. She has also rescued Chitra Bhanu teams from discovery, capture, or death more than a dozen times since. She was one of the only teleporters who did not join Upeo wa Macho in its seven-year exile.

Currently, she is exceptionally eager for new teleporters to join Chitra Bhanu and will gladly mentor them and provide all the training and advice she can provide. She is weary of being solely responsible for rescuing Chitra

Bhanu personnel who get in over their heads. However, because both quantakinesis and teleportation require the same strong latency, and most potential recruits who have the option of learning quantakinesis do, Chitra Bhanu is still seeking new teleporters.

### TAKSH GUPTA

Every new Chitra Bhanu member spends time with the brilliant polymath Taksh Gupta, one of the few neutrals working for Chitra Bhanu. He is a skilled noetic researcher and the order's head of security. Unknown to anyone in the order, including himself, he is also a Talent. He works with the order's Norça advisors to train new recruits in the basics of espionage tradecraft, reviews mission plans for any potentially dangerous mission and is always available for security consultation. In addition, he is the Chitra Bhanu team leader for the joint effort with psi order Norça to develop the flux eater (p. 178). Everyone who works closely with him notices the breadth of his knowledge and abilities, and how he always seems to be at the right place at exactly the right time to both accomplish his goals and avoid problems. He reminds Dr. Bhurano of members of the old Æon Society, but even she does not understand Talents, beyond knowing that some people are preternaturally skilled and lucky, and that Max Mercer, and to a lesser degree some other people, like Taksh Gupta, she has encountered lack noetic or Quantum powers, but are in some subtle way *different* from neutrals.

## THE LOST AND THE ANGRY

Because Chitra Bhanu is exceptionally secret, has only been recruiting new members within the last year, and only began creating new quantakinetics over the last six months, no new members have left the order, and none are likely to soon. Because he wants a quantakinetic or two in psi order Norça, proxy del Fuego has let both Dr. Bhurano and all members of Chitra Bhanu know he'd be happy to accept them into his order, and would use his order's formidable resources to protect their secret.

However, a few surviving members of the purge have not rejoined Dr. Bhurano's revived Chitra Bhanu. A handful of quantakinetics remain in hiding, using fake IDs and their innate abilities to evade noetic detection. Most would readily join the new Chitra Bhanu if Dr. Bhurano or another chib contacted them, if they can find the former member first. Unfortunately, in addition to the few lone quantakinetics out there, the mercenary terrorist organization SAFEGuard (see **Mission Statements**) has recruited four quantakinetics, and is actively recruiting. These quantakinetics are led by Pari Ghosh, who had connections to SAFEGuard before she entered the quantakinesis Prometheus Chamber. Ms. Ghosh and her three compatriots want revenge on the psi orders responsible for the Chitra Bhanu purge. Even if they knew about them, Ghosh and the quantakinetics who follow her wouldn't be interested in studying or even attacking the Doyen. They firmly place the blame for the attack on the Legions, Norça, and Orgotek, and dream of utterly destroying all three psi orders. Even the fact that proxy del Fuego is now sheltering and working with Dr. Bhurano would not sway their thirst for vengeance, in large part because Ghosh and her allies were all deeply traumatized by the 2111 purge.

Four other quantakinetics remain at large, and no one in Chitra Bhanu or SAFEGuard know their location, or if they are still alive. Even before its near destruction, Chitra Bhanu was the smallest psi order, and Dr Bhurano knows these four didn't die during the purge. However, their trails have gone cold.

The fate of Chitra Bhanu members with other Aptitudes is somewhat clearer. Most died in the 2111 purge. Most of the survivors continue to work with Dr. Bhurano. However, because they lacked *Psi Cloak*, the remainder proved relatively easy for a joint ISRA/Æon Trinity task force to locate. Æon Trinity operatives interviewed the surviving non-quantakinetics they found. They swiftly learned none had taken part in experiments involving Aberrants or sub-Aberrant mutants and were guilty of nothing more than belonging to the wrong psi order. A third of these psions have gone freelance, and the rest took advantage of the Æon Trinity's offer of employment. Unsurprisingly, none of these psions wished to work for other psi orders and view the purge as either a terrible misunderstanding or evidence of some conspiracy.

Dr. Bhurano has so far avoided contacting former order members working for the Æon Trinity but has reached out to several freelance former members. One of the order's telepaths scanned them to determine how they were likely to react and one of the order's clears suggested the best time and circumstances for this revelation. As a result, Dr. Bhurano has recruited eight of the 27 freelance psions who used to belong to Chitra Bhanu into her revived psi order.

# RUNNING CHITRA BHANU CAMPAIGNS

Currently, Chitra Bhanu consists of 70 psions, including 17 newly active quantakinetics and seven new psions with other Aptitudes. While Dr. Bhurano monitors the activities of all members, chibs also possess a great deal of independence. While the 14 Chitra Bhanu members working at the Venezuela Blight Zone Research Center fall directly under Dr. Bhurano's authority, the others belong to semi-independent cells who have minimal contact with one another. Dr. Bhurano either orders a cell to pursue a specific goal, or cells ask for her approval in pursuing their own goals. Most of the time, cells are free to perform their own activities if they advance Chitra Bhanu's goals in some fashion. While Dr. Bhurano usually only issues orders when there is an emergency or some potentially important new phenomena she wishes to investigate.

## SCIENCE, ESPIONAGE, AND INVESTIGATION

The survivors of the 2111 purge were scientists, and this continues to shape the reborn psi order. Many new members are scientists, but a significant minority have

experience in covert operations and various forms of investigation. These three activities should form the core of most scenarios and campaigns involving Chitra Bhanu. In addition to studying the Doyen to try and defend against or eliminate them, Dr. Bhurano emphasizes to new members that the universe holds many hidden mysteries few others are studying. Dr. Bhurano also worries that some of these mysteries hold secrets as important and dangerous as the existence and activities of the Doyen. She knows humanity has discovered more extinct intelligent species than living ones, and believes that while the Doyen have killed some, others died for unknown reasons, and she wishes to learn more about the various possible fates of intelligent species. She also knows the Earth holds its own mysteries and dangers. Some are modern, but others date back to the Nova Age, and a few are far older. As a result, Chitra Bhanu has become a psi order devoted to investigating all manner of oddities, rumors, and urban legends.

Questions Chitra Bhanu are studying or plan to investigate soon include:

- Understanding the Doyen and how to repel or destroy them.
- Capturing one of the Doyen so researchers can study it and hopefully build a bioapp capable of detecting them.
- Wycoff's Blight and the Venezuela Plaguelands are the two largest remaining Quantum Flux Zones on Earth. Is some powerful Aberrant or decades-old piece of nova technology helping maintain them?
- Other than their activities relating to humanity, what are or have the Doyen been up to? How many species have they exterminated or dominated?
- What is the goal of the Aberrants in the ruins of Paris?
- What killed off the various extinct species humanity has discovered? Were the Doyen responsible for all these extinctions, or are there other equally serious threats out there?
- Only a relatively small number of Aberrants are attacking Earth and its colonies, what happened to the rest of them?
- Why are the Chromatics attacking humanity, and why does their noetic biotech look so similar to the biotech humanity is now using?

Most Venezuela Blight Zone Research Center researchers are content to split their time between the laboratory and occasional ventures out into the Plaguelands, most new Chitra Bhanu recruits are people who balance a keen and questioning mind with a love of travel and adventure. As a result, Chitra Bhanu campaigns are often about science, usually exciting and often dangerous field science, either on Earth or out among the stars. Locating, covertly observing, and attempting to capture or destroy one of the Doyen could make for an exciting, and potentially quite dangerous and action-filled campaign, particularly if it takes characters across the universe. Of course, it's hardly the only option this order offers for amazing stories.

Good scenarios or even campaigns for Chitra Bhanu could focus on an interesting mystery the characters must decipher. There are a wealth of such mysteries on Earth and Luna, like the Gorgon Karst, the Hadley Rille Anomaly, or the creatures lurking in the ruins of Kuala Lumpur (see **Terra Firma**, Chapter Three for descriptions of each). Mysteries also lurk out among the stars, with oddities like the proto-Doyen ruins on Alcin-Plasi (**Distant Worlds**, p. 131), or the terrifyingly powerful Quantum-powered Taniwha servitors on Rohe or the profoundly alien intruders of the Breach (see **Under Alien Skies**, Chapter Four). Depending on the desired length of a campaign, and how in-depth the players like their mystery solving, an entire campaign could be built around understanding and potentially solving or resolving a single mystery, or the characters could investigate a new mystery in each scenario.

As in any **Trinity Continuum: Æon** campaign, one of the first questions to ask is whether most of the campaign will take place on Earth or out among the stars. Confining the campaign to Earth and Luna is simultaneously easier and more difficult for members of Chitra Bhanu. The Earth is home to many billions of people, and so hiding in plain sight is relatively easy, but potential threats are also unavoidable. A security camera might record a character using abilities only a full-fledged quantakinetic could possess, a telepath might read a character's mind, or the intelligence services of some government or metacorporation might take an active interest in one or more of the characters.

Exploring among the stars offers vastly different challenges for members of Chitra Bhanu. The first obstacle is getting to the stars. Unless done with the knowledge and cooperation of the jump ship's crew, joining an established expedition on a Leviathan jump ship would not be possible without excellent fake IDs, and even then, carries a high degree of risk. The characters would be living in close quarters with dozens of other psions and neutrals who would be alarmed and likely even horrified to discover they are sharing their starship with the Chitra Bhanu.

There are two other options: S.K. Bhurano finds a prospective member with a strong latency who would rather be a teleporter and has proxy del Fuego arrange for them to have access to the Upeo wa Macho Prometheus Chamber, or one of the characters is a clairsentient, and the team gains access to a small jump ship, presumably via the order's contacts with the Æon Trinity. Either option gives the characters full freedom to explore the stars. However, psions out among the stars are uncommon and studying some of the mysteries humanity already knows about will require more than just asking politely. The personnel on Rohe and various other worlds are investigating potentially dangerous locations. Anyone who visits one of these sites will either need some sort of official approval, or excellently forged documents. Fortunately, both proxy del Fuego and the members of the Æon Council allied with proxy Bhurano could both provide the team with high quality IDs as member of Norça or the Æon Trinity, in return for full access to all data uncovered.

Alternately, if one of the characters is a teleporter, the characters could sneak around without credentials, infiltrating secure locations and performing their own investigations. Of course, the risk there is the characters could end up facing arrest or even open combat with local security personnel who might assume they are spies, saboteurs, or even Aberrants. If a scenario goes especially poorly, other organizations, and perhaps even the general public could learn the characters include one or more quantakinetics, potentially setting off a new wave of anti-quantakinetic paranoia.

Players can have a lot of fun with scenarios where they are presented with a mystery and spend time solving and learning why it happens and what it means. These solutions should also either tie into larger mysteries or involve revelations or solutions to potential threats to humanity or include information that directly aids humanity. For example, studying the ruins on Alcin-Plasi might provide the characters with information about how to locate the long-dead Doyen homeworld (**Under Alien Skies**, p. 122). Studying and interacting with the Taniwha of Rohe could result in the characters coming up with a daring plan to carry off a few cubic liters of Rohe soil, and convincing the Taniwha who can manifest from it to use their formidable powers to capture one of the Doyen for study. As a more general rule, while Chitra Bhanu remains a psi order devoted to science, it is particularly focused on science that provides solutions to serious threats against humanity.

The following Paths and Edges are available to all Chitra Bhanu members

## FIELD SCIENTIST (ROLE PATH)

While some scientists are most comfortable in a high-tech laboratory, insulated from the world around them, others live for the chance to visit remote locations and collect data on unusual and occasionally dangerous phenomena. The life of a field scientist is often difficult and uncomfortable, and frequently involves living for weeks or even months in remote locations; the depths of the Amazon jungle, tops of mountains, the interior of the Antarctic, the lunar surface, or even other worlds. However, most field scientists would not trade this danger and discomfort for life in a sterile lab.

### PATH CONCEPTS

Daring xenoarcheologist, gonzo wildlife biologist, tough and hardened geologist or planetologist

**Example Connections:** Laboratory scientists, field scientists, pilots and drivers, university staff

**Skills:** Enigmas, Science, Survival, Technology

**Edges:** Brilliant Insight, Danger Sense, Hardy •, Iron Will •, Lightning Calculator, Ms. Fix-It, Patron •, Photographic Memory, Wealth • or ••

### SPECIAL EDGE: BRILLIANT INSIGHT ••

**Prerequisite**: Science Path or membership in Chitra Bhanu

You excel at wresting answers from the mysteries of the cosmos. You gain 2 Enhancement for any Enigmas or Science roll to understand or decipher a scientific mystery, like the source of a particular type of unusual radiation, or the origin and properties of a strange new material.

## DOYEN HUNTER (SOCIETY PATH)

The most dangerous, and arguably the most important task Chitra Bhanu has set for itself is learning all it can about the mysterious Doyen. Those members who search for the Doyen regularly risk their lives and their bodily autonomy to learn more about the insidious threat to humanity represented by these exceptionally powerful and deadly creatures.

### PATH CONCEPTS

Angry 2111 purge survivor, daring noetic researcher, idealistic defender of humanity

**Example Connections:** Conspiracy theorists, Norça operatives, Section Minerva personnel

**Skills:** Enigmas, Integrity, Larceny, Persuasion

**Edges:** Alternate Identity, Artifact • or ••, Covert, Danger Sense, Iron Will, Safe House, Telepathic Resistance

CHAPTER THREE
ISRA

"Does the prophet see the future or does he see a line of weakness, a fault or cleavage that he may shatter with words or decisions as a diamond-cutter shatters his gem with a blow of a knife?"
— Frank Herbert, Dune

ISRA hides nothing but remains an enigma. This psi-order-cum-religion, fueled by crowdsourced prophecy, has captured the imagination of the public in myriad ways, both positive and negative. At its heart, ISRA is an engine built by Otha Herzog to understand the universe, and to share that understanding with humanity. Part of that duty involves seeking out threats and neutralizing them before they even exist. As much or more involves expanding the boundaries of what humans consider human, expanding the concept of siblinghood beyond the family, beyond the village, beyond the nation, beyond even the species, to encompass all thinking beings. Otha Herzog often refers to the order's Prometheus Chamber as a "crucible," wherein latents have their powers awakened by purifying and refining their noetic template. He regularly makes comparisons between the Greek Prometheus legend and the role fire plays in Zoroastrianism as a source of divine purification.

## HUMANITY'S AGORA

The Interplanetary School for Research and Advancement doesn't carry that name because it sounds nice. ISRA is a place of learning structured as an open-ended educational journey, including resources and context necessary for others to explore and learn on their own. Open discussion and debate are hallmarks of virtually everything ISRA does, and curiosity is a cardinal virtue. Veterans encourage members to share visions and dreams (even latents or neutrals). A fundamental belief in ISRA is all people are capable of clairsentient vision, at least to some degree.

Along with that openness comes a fluid structure able to adapt to virtually any conditions. Rather than a top-down hierarchy, ISRA has more in common with cell-structure organizations or independently operating campuses working together to create something greater. Whatever global organization exists is solely for the purposes of easing interactions across national borders and to take advantage of economies of scale. ISRA is the friends you know, the friends you've worked with for years, and the friends you haven't met yet, all doing their own thing in their own time — and to an ISRAn, that's exactly how it should be.

## THE WIDER CONTEXT

ISRA is more than an educational institution, more than a school of philosophy, more than a mutual aid network. ISRA touches on every aspect of human existence, because ISRAn clears perceive every aspect of human existence. Their sight (and insight) are not total, but they see the waves of cause and effect as clearly as neutrals see the ocean's waves break upon the shore.

They see beyond humanity, too. Without clears, the wider universe would be as much a mystery to humanity in the 22nd century as it was in the 20th. ISRA doesn't have a monopoly on clairsentience (despite Otha's statement that no one ever really leaves ISRA). However, it is the foremost organization in human society for pushing the boundaries of understanding and perception outward. ISRAns don't make every discovery, but they perceive the potential for every discovery, and the potential for the effects stemming from them. Individuals discover — ISRA plans for the aftermath, good or ill. The sheer power of thousands of clairsentients working together represents the greatest engine for learning humanity has ever known, and though it may seem undirected and scattershot, it nevertheless represents humanity's eye on the universe.

In expanding sight outward and into the future, ISRA also serves a more subtle and critical function, one the Old Man himself is deeply committed to. With knowledge comes understanding; from knowledge and understanding of others, we gain the capacity to empathize, to work together. Ostensibly intended to help unite humanity, ISRA's mission expands the idea of unity ever outward. To ISRAns, it's only a matter of time before the definition of "human" expands beyond homo sapiens sapiens. It's their job to prepare others for that future. Not every ISRAn practices radical empathy, but it's hardly an uncommon tendency in the organization.

## DHIKR

*Dhikr* is a practice of devotional recitation and remembrance of God and plays a central role in both Sufi Islam and the Baha'i Faith. In the context of ISRA, however, dhikr serves as jargon for a meditative state employed by clairsentients derived from the religious practice in the order's early days, under the Old Man's guidance. In ISRAn practice, repetition of a text centers and grounds a clear, allowing them to better perceive the noetic medium, and push themselves to greater awareness of the universe. This text need not, and frequently isn't, religious in origin — all that matters is the text has deeper meaning to the clear herself. While quite a few do meld the noetic practice with religious observance, ISRA-trained clairsentients have been known to use everything from passages from novels to music lyrics for this purpose.

Clears often *ride* dhikr, projecting their consciousness outward in a semi-controlled fashion, allowing the noetic current to take their minds where it will, leading to a sense of knowing-without-knowing that clears often describe as a magnetic attraction to where they're "meant to be," wherever that is. This is always a golden opportunity for the Storyguide to dangle story hooks or offer help for players who are stuck or unsure where to go next.

**System:** Entering the dhikr state requires a Culture + Composure roll. Extra successes on this roll are conserved in the Dhikr Pool, and the player may use these successes to reduce or cancel out Complications due to psionic noise, distraction, or similar confounding effects on Clairsentience while the clear is in the dhikr state. While in the state, the clear is considered to have a Psionic Connection to the Still Point (the Clairsentient Prometheus Chamber).

When riding dhikr, ask the Storyguide a question and roll Psi + Integrity against a Difficulty set by the Storyguide, Difficulty 1 for simple or straightforward questions up to Difficulty 5 for complex questions or those with highly obfuscated answers. Record the number of extra successes on this roll. The Storyguide will offer a series of vague sensory impressions — nothing concrete or direct — to spur the clear forward. When the clear encounters the subject of their dhikr-ride visions they may expend banked successes one-for-one to add Enhancement to any roll.

While they're inveterate optimists, ISRAns are not naive. It is impossible to be naive when you are able to perceive possible tragic futures. As an organization, ISRA is institutionally aware of myriad potential Eschatons, events that have failed to occur due to clairsentient intervention. Humanity may be progressing beyond internal conflict, but they're far from reaching such a lofty goal. While humanity has found friends in the universe, there are just as many dangers. In many ways, ISRA represents the first line of defense against threats internal and external. They are an out-of-context puzzle that those who wish to do harm to humanity must solve first, lest their plans be undone before they're even conceived.

ISRA is the least organized and least stratified of the Psi Orders — but at the same time, it is by *far* the most interconnected and the most supportive of members, though not always in a straightforward or obvious fashion. As a result, it can be difficult to get a feel for the true, underlying structure of ISRA. Many longtime members still discover new facets of the organization daily.

## LEADER OF A LEADERLESS MOVEMENT

Outsiders sometimes liken ISRA to a flock of birds — individuals change direction in perfect synchrony with their fellows, creating the semblance of a single superorganism with a unified consciousness. Like with birds, this is an illusion. Clears are individuals, and like any collection of individuals they have myriad opinions and ideologies dividing them. What they share is the ability to perceive the true structure of ISRA, stratified not across a vertical hierarchy but across *time*.

Social power in ISRA comes from two factors: perception and elocution. In other words, from the ability to both perceive what is otherwise imperceptible (especially the future) and to convey what one has learned to others. Focal crystals provide a shortcut to the latter, but the clear's own subsequent thoughts and feelings don't travel along with a focal crystal, and those details are just as important to ISRA as the vision itself. Those who are able to see further, whether in distance, time, or specificity, and to elucidate what they've witnessed, carry more social power than their fellows. By that token, of course, so do those *who are known to do so in the future*. Those who are or will be more informed than their peers occupy the invisible centers of gravity in the highly fluid structure of ISRA.

No one, except the Old Man himself, would dispute that Otha Herzog is the heart and soul of ISRA, blessed with unmatched vision and a marvelous ability to express himself. Millions hang on his every word, and much to his chagrin, more than a few consider him a messiah. For these reasons and others, he tends to stay isolated, but even in isolation he cannot help but be the center of gravity for ISRA. How could he fail to be, with a school of followers (in varying degrees of piety) able to sense cause and effect in such a holistic way? Herzog does his best to keep a light hand on the controls, never saying too much or too little and being unfailingly polite and kind.

If Herzog is the sun around which ISRA revolves, then beyond him, with enormous centers of gravity of their own, are the "planets." Sometimes referred to as the Inner Circle, these clears' influence has little to do with their relationship with the Old Man. Frequently, they are at least personally acquainted with him, but Otha himself would be the first to point out this is effect, not cause. Around these luminaries cluster other people, some influential enough to bring their own "orbital families" with them, like moons, while others flock to them in ones and twos, like little asteroids. Naturally, of course, there are just as many clears beyond the Inner Circle forming their own "asteroid belts" with a few small centers of gravity.

### SIGNAL IN THE NOISE

A clear has a vision, vague but insistent, of problems on a colony world. Try though they might, they can't tune the vision to clarity. If they have local clear friends, they might collectively scan, but even then they will leave an impression in a focal crystal for their correspondents in Letters to Otha. Those correspondents will pick up the vision, perhaps probing the issue themselves if it's within their range and leave an impression in their own crystal. And so on down the chain it goes.

Eventually, the many-times-removed impression of a vision makes its way to someone with an immediate relationship to the Inner Circle, someone with a smaller but no less competent circle of influence, or someone who is in an immediate position to do something about the issue. In the first two cases, these collective circles coordinate to probe the issue with the clearest vision available, and dispatch aid or communication through Letters to Otha to someone in a position to do something. In the latter case, though the warning is still fuzzy, it has already arrived on the scene.

This is, loosely speaking, how the chain of reporting in Letters to Otha works. It's undirected and can be slow at times, but for a clairsentient who witnesses

a threat long before it actually becomes one, time is frequently a luxury they *do* have. The chain also provides advice and aid, both through clears with more advanced vision setting up assistance well ahead of time "just in case" or through direct support. No ISRAn is ever truly alone. Someone is always, always looking out for them, just as every ISRAn is looking out for others.

## STABLE NODES

While ISRA is highly fluid, it does retain a few internal, generally stable, entities. These handle day-to-day responsibilities, essential tasks, outreach, and the numerous other duties serving as the foundation for the work of the Order.

### ISRA CAMPUSES

Virtually every major city and every county willing to work with a psi order hosts an ISRA campus. Some are small while others sprawl across acres. The ISRA Campus on Luna is no more than a few floors in one of the above-surface skyscrapers in Olympus, while the Campus in Sydney, Australia is often mistaken for a public park by tourists. These Campuses provide community programs; ongoing education and training for neutrals, latents, and psions; and provide an always-available point of contact for the Order, both for those inside and outside.

- **Housing:** Every ISRA Campus has living space. Some are used by campus staff, some are occupied full-time by ISRAns, and some are reserved for travelers and those in need. Accommodations are typically relatively spartan (particularly in locales where space is at a premium) but sufficient, with most amenities being communal.
- **Child Care:** Most countries in the modern era provide some form of socialized child care, but not all do. This is especially true in areas still recovering from the Aberrant War or have suffered recent catastrophes, such as Western Europe. Every ISRA Campus has at least one, and frequently several, full-time child-care specialists, including teachers and medical professionals, whose sole job is to look after the children of ISRAns whose parents have been called away by duty or the necessities of a psionic vision.

### INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

A catch-all term for the myriad working groups who interface between ISRA and outside agencies, Interdisciplinary Studies is primarily staffed by latents and neutrals. They cover duties ranging from diplomacy to communication to organizing joint efforts between Psi Orders. Much of ISRA's day-to-day work takes place under this umbrella.

### ORIENTATION

The enhanced perception common to clears often overwhelms new psions. Orientation is a mentoring process, akin to a support group, where an established clear leads a group discussion between novices. However, this process doesn't stop once a clear gets their psionic feet under them. Orientation groups meet regularly wherever there are ISRAn clears, and while attendance is fluid, everyone is welcome.

A full accounting of projects ISRA is presently undertaking would be impossible due to the sheer number and kind of projects, as well as many of these projects focus on events that have not yet and may never come to pass. As a result, ISRA generally exists in a state of controlled seeming-chaos, probably the closest thing modern humans have come to an actual anarchic community without a war being involved. From the inside, of course, to those with sufficient vision, it *mostly* makes sense. Plenty of strange rabbit-hole projects still exist though. Pick a subject, virtually any subject, and someone at ISRA is working on it in some capacity.

## LISTENER FRIENDSHIP COMMITTEE

Contact with the Listeners, aliens whose entire population is clairsentient, is perhaps the biggest and most dramatic event in ISRAn culture at the present time. Keeping secrets from clairsentients is hard at the best of times, but a secret of this magnitude spread like wildfire throughout ISRA, and it's become one of the primary topics of discourse in virtually every context. The prospect of an entire culture organized around the presupposition of clairsentience is exciting and illuminating in equal measure. Such is the clamor to visit the Listener homeworld, Skete, that an entire organization, the Listener Friendship Committee, has sprung up to manage ISRA's relationship with the Listeners.

Like most ISRAn orgs, the LFC is an ad-hoc volunteer-run group, operating with no official power beyond collective assent to allow it to manage the situation. Mainly staffed by xenobiologists, sociologists, and other specialists, the LFC is responsible for maintaining the wait-list for travel to Skete, which is rigidly controlled by the Listeners themselves, who fear revealing themselves to the wider galaxy.

Apart from directing traffic and operating the lottery for slots in the next expedition to Skete, the Committee also serves as the face of ISRA on Skete. The Listeners, whose culture centers around hundreds of monastic orders who specialize in the development of clairsentient powers, by and large consider ISRA to be humanity's version of one of those orders. Having a formal structure makes interfacing with the Monastic Synod (the Listener government) easier, and therefore makes it easier to convince them to allow more ISRAns to visit Skete. The LFC also frequently serves as an intermediary between Listeners and other groups from Earth, many of whom are not versed in understanding the patterns of Listener thought or how their culture operates. The Committee maintains a full-time legation in the Human Embassy on Skete, a floating platform anchored off-shore (a fuzzy term, since the amphibious Listeners' society extends beyond the waterline).

## NOETIC ETHICS COUNCIL

ISRA's psion screenings, famously considered the easiest to pass by the general public, are more rigorous than they appear. With multiple clairsentients observing an applicant's noetic and behavioral potential, those who intend to do harm or otherwise abuse clairsentience tend not to make it through. That's a very small number of people, though — on the whole, most people who turn up at ISRA's doors genuinely want to do good, helpful, or at least non-harmful things with the gift of clairsentience. Nobody, however, is perfect, on either side of this equation. Sometimes, observers miss something. Sometimes, an applicant makes a string of bad decisions after undergoing the Prometheus Effect. However it happens, sometimes people do bad things with the gift of clairsentience, and when they do, the Noetic Ethics Council is waiting.

The Council is small — no more than a dozen clears at any time, who move in and out of the project as their lives and the demands of the work allow. It has no official authority within the Order, nor the right to discipline misbehaving clears. Instead, the Council has two primary methods of ensuring compliance with ethical standards. The first is to simply hold an intervention before the clear in question makes a poor decision, the better to help them understand the stressors in their life that led them to potentially take this course of action and hopefully to avert it. The second, used only in extremis, is to report malfeasance or potential malfeasance to the authorities. The Council does its work well, so the latter option is only very rarely necessary.

Still, opinions about the council are split within ISRA. The Noetic Ethics Council isn't secret (indeed, they hold community potlucks on weekends), but no one asked them to do what they're doing or gave them permission to do so. Some think the Council's doing a valuable job, but their work remains a largely

thankless task. They've always struggled to attract interested members, especially considering members must agree to waive all personal privacy expectations while serving. Even in ISRA, where privacy's much less of a concern, that's a big ask. More controversial is they've begun observing psion activity *outside* ISRA, and have staged more than one of their interventions on non-ISRAn psions. They don't have the numbers to scan *all* psions, *everywhere*, but when psionic malfeasance comes to their attention, they consider it their duty to act, ISRAns or no. So far, this has not backfired or caused trouble for ISRA. So far.

## INTERSTELLAR CARTOGRAPHY INITIATIVE

When one thinks of space exploration, one often thinks of intrepid Upeo wa Macho long-haulers, teleporting far from home in hopes of finding new habitable worlds, opportunities for scientific study, and other sentient species to share the galaxy with. And it's true — the Upeo are responsible for the vast majority of boots-on-the-ground exploration. But when it comes to sheer numbers, ISRA has mapped *far* more worlds, having never left the comfort of home.

Some clears consider themselves full-time astrocartographers. More than a few of are on the long waitlist for a chance to pilot a Leviathan, and hone their skills in the meantime by pushing their vision to its limits. Quite a few hitchhike aboard the mammoth jump ships to extend their clairsentient vision outward. These dedicated few perform a significant plurality of all astronomical mapping at ISRA. The majority of significant finds are more due to the dabblers who take a turn in one of ISRA's ARES pods, which most psions with even a vague interest in interstellar cartography do. Neutrals and latents working with the ICI at ISRA have developed a streamlined process for freelancing clears to leave psionic impressions of systems they've discovered in focal crystals, which are later cross-checked by experts. Duplicate discoveries happen regularly (it's a running joke in ISRA's star-mapping community that one isn't really an astrocartographer until one has "discovered" Zeta Reticuli), but even with these false positives the number of new discoveries more than justifies the effort of cross-checking submissions.

## WORLD WITHOUT WALLS

To a sufficiently determined clairsentient, there is no such thing as a secret. Numerous measures exist to try to shield moments and locations from noetic

oversight, but even these measures don't have a perfect record of operation. Within ISRA, this has resulted in a culture of openness, complementing the scholastic tone of the order. Open debate and discussion are pillars of ISRAn culture, and free access to information is part of that. After all, clears can see virtually anything, but (with the possible exception of the Old Man) they can't see *everything*. Their visions often lack context, and information gathered through mundane sources might provide that context. The only secrets in ISRA are the ones inside one's own skull.

For some, that's not enough. Linus Kovač, a journalist before joining ISRA, was the first to start the ball rolling. He began by establishing multiple independent nodes across the OpNet and uploading a series of exposés on subjects relating to metacorporate malfeasance to governmental anti-insurrection strategies. While his initial leads on these stories were the result of clairsentient vision, he backed each lead with leaked documents, anonymized interviews, and further evidence. Following these releases (which have made him persona non grata in several countries), he's gained not only notoriety but also a substantial number of well-wishers and hangers-on. He's also attracted several accomplices within ISRA who find his vision of a human society without secrets appealing.

To date, World Without Walls — an informal name for a working group Kovač never thought would need one — has released documents related to over a thousand discrete events, programs, or organizations previously kept secret from the general public. Some of these are clearly oriented toward a public good, drawing on Kovač's journalism experience and shining a light on things that Ought Not Be Happening. Others, however, particularly Kovač's newer followers, hew to a stricter ideological line, indiscriminately releasing anything they find, regardless of the content, intent, or purpose behind the secrecy. Several young hotshots have even attempted to gain access to Project Rewrite's files, resulting in a major scandal Otha himself had to smooth over. Despite the problems World Without Walls has caused, though, the Old Man still hasn't seen fit to censure them, describing the group's activities as "an understandable excess of youthful zeal married with an unwavering and laudable commitment to the truth."

Part of the problem is World Without Walls has no real structure. Kovač is an important figure, but he's far from the only one. Oksana Anatolyevna Lagunov conned her way into a retreat attended by half the spouses of the current FedBoard members, pretending to be a servant and recording everything she saw and heard, which she uploaded unfiltered onto the OpNet. Miri Chen released the source genetic code for half a dozen cutting-edge Orgotek bioapps weeks before their official release date. Victoria Hansen hitchhiked aboard an uncrewed cargo supply shuttle and brought along a powerful imaging system to take detailed photos of FSA internment camps. The list of World Without Walls' enemies grows longer and lower — sooner or later, *one* of them is going to act.

# ALLIES

Otha Herzog makes a great show of being everyone's friend. He's kind, cordial, and seemingly impossible to anger, for all that he often offers incisive advice or delicately cutting wit. As long as the Old Man is around, he'll be the face of ISRA, and the face of ISRA is a jovial old man. It's no wonder most people think of ISRA as "everyone's friend." To be sure, some see ISRA as a cult (if, mostly, a harmless one), but the people ISRA has helped or inspired over the last decade and change greatly outnumber their detractors.

## UPEO WA MACHO

The relationship between Upeo wa Macho and ISRA has been close-knit from the beginning, and not just because clairsentients and teleporters worked hand-in-hand exploring the universe. Proxies Atwan and Herzog are, on a personal level, friends, and though events have strained that friendship somewhat, their relationship has been tested and holds firm. They collaborated on numerous projects, not least of which is *Huruf al-Hayy*, and were often each other's first choice of confidante. When the teleporters vanished, Herzog said nothing, save that he looked forward to seeing them again. When they returned after seven years of self-imposed exile, the Old Man was the first to welcome them back.

Still, for most people, seven years is a long time — especially when the psi orders' institutional memory goes back less than two decades. ISRA put a lot

of effort into maintaining those projects reliant on teleporters in the meantime, and especially into the Leviathan Project. Now the teleporters are back, and word-of-Herzog is everything's fine, ISRA is having to relearn that reliance. It's a bumpy road, but even the newest clears fresh from the Prometheus Chamber can see the positive noetic current from rekindling that friendship, and the Upeo sorely missed the sheer breadth of ISRA's vision.

### Norça

It seems a strange match, an Order that sees everything and an Order committed to secrecy, but ISRA and Norça have only grown closer over the years. The Norça know to listen when clears, especially Herzog, speak, and more than a few of their missions and campaigns have their origin in information passed from one Order to the other. Several Norça cells are actually partial or total members of ISRA, both for proximity to useful information and to coordinate efforts quietly. This door swings both ways. Norça operatives will discover things and pass that information to ISRA for the clears to take a closer look.

That coordination isn't just on a low level, either. Proxies del Fuego and Herzog have exchanged a great many words about a great many subjects, especially over the last few years as more details of the Chitra Bhanu purge have come to light. Otha, no stranger to remaining circumspect, is moving quietly, dropping hints he knows will spiral out into action both in ISRA and Norça as well as outside the two orders. The two men have a strong respect for one another, and del Fuego is probably one of the few people who doesn't leave a conversation with the Old Man feeling slightly perplexed.

### Chitra Bhanu

To the world, the Chitra Bhanu were destroyed in 2112, their proxy slain with the rest and their Prometheus Chamber destroyed. This, of course, is not the truth. The thing about truth is it's almost impossible to hide it from a determined clairsentient. The Chitra Bhanu purge may be a decade in the past, but it occupies no small amount of mental real estate in the psionic community even in 2123. More than one clairsentient has turned their eye toward the event, its aftermath, and all that came before. Still, much remains a mystery even to ISRA. Only a fraction of those clears glean new knowledge from that event as the time and place are heavily masked by emotion, Quantakinesis, and official secrecy. The ongoing existence of the Chitra Bhanu is not quite an open secret in ISRA, but a handful of ISRAns are aware of it.

In any other organization, this might spell disaster for the Chitra Bhanu, but ISRA is not in the habit of acting without understanding first. The Old Man keeps an ear to the ground, noetically speaking, watching over the survivors he and his fellows in the know have located. They've made no overtures yet but have arranged for subtle aid in a few instances. Herzog is waiting for Dr. Bhurano to contact him. He very much wants to hear her side of the story and knows pursuing her is more likely to drive her away. He does not know about the Doyen, who have always been careful to mask their presence since they handed humanity the keys to clairsentience, and certainly knows nothing of their role in the Chitra Bhanu purge. Should Dr. Bhurano contact Herzog and reveal the truth, it would be a rare thing indeed for the Clairsentient proxy: a surprise.

## Foes & Threats

ISRA goes out of its way to make friends and present an amicable face. This, combined with the Old Man's natural charisma and disarming manner, makes ISRA one of the more popular psi orders (at least, among those people who don't consider it a weird cult). Yet even ISRA has its enemies, ranging from powerful individuals to small organizations to entire governments, and few ISRAns will go their entire careers without running into trouble caused by at least one of them.

### Unfriendly Nations

Not all nations in the modern world are open, pluralistic, democratically organized societies — in fact, the largest and most populous tend not to be. Governments built on an authoritarian model usually have a steadfast commitment to keeping every secret they can (a tendency not unique to their philosophy but magnified by it significantly). For such governments, many psions are a potentially existential threat: electrokinetics can break into computer systems with

ease, biokinetics can fool every form of biometric security yet devised, teleporters can simply go anywhere regardless of security precautions, and so on. None of these, however, match the horror such governments have for clairsentients, who, should they put their minds to it, can do all of the above without exposing themselves *at all*. While all governments would love to have clairsentients working for them, and many do, the sheer number of unaffiliated (or, worse, affiliated with antagonistic organizations) clairsentients is far too high for their liking.

Such governmental unfriendliness frequently comes in the form of denied visas, declined requests for access, or surveillance and intimidation; the sorts of petty evils bureaucracies are experts at wielding on a wide scale. Only when a particular clear poses an obvious threat or when the government feels they can act with impunity are they likely to employ violence or other direct means of controlling or silencing the clear. Sometimes, this happens without official sanction — a local authority with a particular hatred for psions — but sometimes it comes straight from the top. The trouble then becomes surprising the clear, because most clairsentients are quite skilled at seeing danger well before it arrives.

The FSA is by far the most common offender when it comes to intimidating or acting directly against clairsentients, but it's common in the United Republic as well, and not uncommon in Russia or China. Any clear operating in those areas without government sanction should keep a low profile and have multiple back-up plans for making a clean getaway should the need arise.

## PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

Nation-states are not the only actors who pose a threat to ISRA. Though, in the case of smaller organizations, it's typically not an antipathy towards clairsentients that motivates them but a desire to employ their powers for their gain. Truthfully, this tendency exists in virtually any organization, but the majority simply take "no" for an answer.

Take the example of the Ministry for Noetic Affairs. On paper, ISRA has a cordial working relationship with the Ministry, but the reality is much more complicated. Proxy Bue Li has, on several occasions, accused Proxy Herzog of withholding information, an accusation which Proxy Herzog has not so much denied as smiled and shrugged his shoulders. Bue Li has placed several neutral sleeper agents in ISRA, with instructions to do nothing but smile, get along, and keep an ear to the ground. So far, these agents have yet to find anything dangerous or incriminating that ISRA is hiding. A few carefully chosen Telepaths have instructions to, under rare circumstances, gently urge clears to say a little more than they otherwise would. So far, the Ministry has been extremely cautious, knowing full well ISRA is almost certain to foresee and counter any overt action against them. Paradoxically, this is precisely why Bue Li desires a better understanding of the clairsentient Order in the first place.

Other organizations are not so circumspect. The Kryukov Syndicate, a drug-smuggling operation headquartered in Kaliningrad, owes its successes not only to the canny leadership of Anastasia Kryukova (who took power by killing three of her brothers in the power struggle after her late father died) but to her almost suicidally-daring idea — leveraging clairsentients and forcing them to forecast for her. So far, she's only abducted independent clears, hooking them on designer pharmaceuticals and enticing them to Kaliningrad where they're kept under lock and key, though in decent conditions as long as they work. She maintains noetic stealth by purchasing dance clubs and similar venues to act as static for other clears looking for a trail, and her holding facility is festooned with psionic jammers. Her real goal, however, is to design an operation so complex and occulted she can start picking off ISRAn clears, believing their training and practice will enable them to make forecasts far outstripping those clears she's already subverted.

Earth is not the sole source of threats to ISRAns, of course. While the Qin are able to develop rudimentary clairsentience, humans are capable of pushing that noetic boundary further. House Kuei considers this capacity (and many other human psionic capacities, for that matter) an intrinsic threat to the Qin and have developed numerous counterstrategies. One of these acknowledges a simple truth: the Qin know truly little about how humans have suddenly developed such abilities. Without that knowledge they have no means of countering them or developing similar abilities. A working group of House Kuei infiltrators, working as doctors, nurses, or biotech formatting techs, are quietly collecting genetic information from humans, focusing particularly on latents and clears. *Knowledge is power* is a universal aphorism, and the Qin mean to leverage this power towards the pursuit of others.

## DANGEROUS INDIVIDUALS

On August 9th, 2066, Saris Harutyunyan erupted on the outskirts of Yerevan, Armenia. His Aberrant powers bent space-time to such a degree that it snapped

— explosively. Within microseconds of his eruption, he'd carved out a hemispherical cavity a hundred meters across and taken it with him outside of time itself, the implosion shattering windows and knocking in buildings across the city. With nothing but Quantum Flux to identify the cause, authorities simply blamed it on an unknown Aberrant, which they dubbed "The Singularity." This Aberrant never appeared again and was assumed to have left Earth forever. Until, in 2121, it remanifested in the Australian Outback, a few hundred kilometers from Perth, Australia. It wasn't just The Singularity that remanifested, though, but the handful of city blocks it had carved out when it left, dumped unceremoniously in the desert. With those buildings, cars, and buses came the people inside them, all suffering from shock and severe Quantum Flux exposure. The First Legion contained The Singularity and eventually irritated it enough to induce it to leave (once again taking a hundred-meter sphere with it, though this time without anyone else along for the ride). After they struggled to assist the victims who had been displaced from 2066 Yerevan, all 217 of whom suffered from a unique form of Quantum Flux Disorder that had effectively removed their noetic signature. Apart from making it extremely difficult to treat them with noetic medicine, this also renders them totally undetectable to clairsentience. This detail went unnoticed until well after many of them had simply vanished from official awareness. Efforts to track them down over the last few years have, unsurprisingly, been unsuccessful, but it's suspected that at least one of these time-refugees has been responsible for a rash of incidents that have left clairsentient investigators baffled.

# VIPS

ISRA's structure is fluid, almost formless, but within that space are numerous "centers of gravity," individuals who attract followers, hangers-on, and interested parties. These are only a few such individuals, any of whom would make a valuable ally or mentor to a young ISRAn.

## OTHA HERZOG

Otha Herzog remains a paradox. He's not merely a public figure, he's also revered, and in a few deeply uncomfortable to him cases, actually worshipped. He is also a deeply private man, and people who know him well describe him as both reserved and somewhat uncomfortable with fame. Most people who know him well suspect that he'd prefer to live a quiet life of contemplation. He understands he cannot, because his impressive powers give him a responsibility to use them to help humanity.

Also, the fact he cannot go out in pubic without drawing a crowd greatly dismays him, and has led to his periodic excursions, where he dons a simple disguise. During most of these, he does nothing more than walk in a park, but he also occasionally attends religious services and participates in spiritual discussions, including both those run by ISRA and those run by other faiths. While other clears occasionally recognize him, he politely asks them to respect his privacy.

Also, while he mostly spends time with his inner circle, on occasion he goes out to meet with individual ISRA members and teams. He sometimes has one of the order's teleporters take him to visit members on Earth, or other star systems. There's rarely any obvious reason for these visits, but everyone understands when Otha Herzog suddenly appears and wishes to talk to members of an ISRA team, he has some clear reason for doing so. He typically talks to the team members for a while, and eventually seems satisfied with what he's heard, wishes them well, and departs. Sometimes he visits teams preparing to go on dangerous or vitally important missions, but other times the stakes seem quite minor. However, in almost all cases if he visits a team, the mission he talked with them about goes well for them, and some are eventually revealed to be far more important than they initially seemed, like a report of a rise in petty crime in a neighborhood actually turning out to be evidence that an Aberrant cult is moving in.

## LIN NGO

Huruf al-Hayy is ISRA's best-kept secret, a "space station" whose true location is deep beneath the surface of the Moon. This refuge cost no small amount of time, effort, and resources to construct, and keeping it running is no less gargantuan an effort. Much of that responsibility falls on the shoulders of Lin Ngo, Chief Operations Manager for Huruf al-Hayy.

She spends much of her time meditating, using her electrokinetic abilities to "surf" the station's systems, testing them all in turn and using her limited grasp of clairsentience to go beyond mere physical inspection. She has a crew of trusted neutrals, latents, and a few psions (mainly clears) working for her. Few of them ever leave the station for a significant length of time, but she's also known to draft ISRAns who are simply passing through the station. As far as she's concerned, anyone making use of the station's resources is fair game, and there's *always* work to be done.

### Dana Carver

Dana Carver was famous from the moment they were born. The child of two OpNet stars, Dana had everything they ever wanted, and they were terribly, *dreadfully* bored. They took their OpNet stream on the road, backpacking through the UAN and Sudamérica for several years before falling in with a group of ISRAns and visiting Luna. On a lark, they took a latency test. The rest is history. Dana's leverage within ISRA comes not from their following there, but from their fandom outside of it, especially in Australia. The high-and-mighty people Dana hobnobs with never quite realize Dana is nudging the course of national decision-making towards more peaceful, more compassionate ends. They reckon they do more for more people this way than working in a soup kitchen in some FSA hellhole.

### Larzan Attar

When she learned the results of her latency test, Larzan thought there'd been some kind of mistake — she was a wallflower more interested in music than people, whose middling grades were ever the source of anxiety for her parents. Yet here was a chance to be something more, and she took it. Now, she's one of Southwest Asia's most famous muezzin bang divas, weaving genre, style, and presentation in a bewildering display of sound and light. Larzan spends a great deal of her time mentoring young musicians and clears (and is especially interested in those who are both).

### Lorenzo Rojas-Ramos

Millions hang on every one of the Old Man's words, but no few also listen carefully when Lorenzo Rojas-Ramos speaks. The so-called Father of Ascetic ISRA, this early recruit quickly embraced a monastic lifestyle and began to study traditions from across the world, seeing a "holistic oneness" between them. Twenty years later, he's still searching, but has accrued a following who search alongside him. Occupying much of this time with meditation, he is nonetheless happy to receive questions from fellow spiritual seekers — who, hopefully, don't mind an answer in the form of a riddle whose answer lies far in the future.

## Former Members

Leaving ISRA is no mean trick — not because the Order makes it difficult, but because the Order (and the Old Man himself) sees no functional division between the school and the universe at large. Those who leave the fold are not outcasts, and if they feel the need to return are welcomed warmly and treated as though they never *truly* left, but were merely "on sabbatical," a frequent euphemism used for ex-ISRAns.

### Suzana Dias e Silva

Born in São Paulo just before the turn of the century, Suzana was still a child when the psi orders revealed themselves, when first contact with the Qin was made, when biotechnology began to change the world in earnest. The universe was, to her, a thing of ever-unfolding wonder — a wonder she shared with her neighbor and close friend, Hinata Ishikawa, part of the local Nipponese expat community that predated the Aberrant War. When latency testing revealed Hinata had particularly strong Teleportation latency, the two swore that one day, they'd explore the universe together, just the two of them.

While Hinata underwent grueling training with the Upeo wa Macho, Suzana followed her own path to prepare herself. She'd tested positive for psionic latency as well and joined ISRA. She was a model student, applying herself diligently to every task, every meditation, every course of study, and more than earned her time in the Prometheus Chamber. When the Upeo wa Macho, including Hinata, vanished, Suzana did not lose hope but pushed herself even harder, becoming one of ISRA's rising stars in the astrocartography scene. All the while, she pushed the limits of biomodification, augmenting

herself with survival bioapps under the guise of fashion. When Hinata returned with the Upeo, similarly augmented and loaded for a long journey — as Suzana knew she would — the two wasted precious little time on their reunion before departing for the stars. They left no note behind, for Suzana knew it would be child's play for ISRA to figure out what she and Hinata had done. No one's seen either of them for over a year, but now and then, clears find one of Suzana's focal crystals left behind, loaded with observations, personal messages, and a record of what is perhaps history's most well-travelled honeymoon.

### DR. SERMIN KAYNARCA

Trained as a physicist, Sermin never bothered with latency testing, content to think of the universe in terms of discrete math rather than as a holistic entity. Still, ISRA tracked her down, confirmed their suspicions with a quick latency test, and offered Sermin a position teaching physics within ISRA, as well as a dunk in the clairsentient Prometheus Chamber. Out of sheer curiosity, she agreed. She does not regret that decision. She relishes the opportunity to observe interesting physical phenomena directly, and to never miss an opportunity for such. But, she has nevertheless become being one of the loudest and most outspoken voices against ISRA.

To Sermin, ISRA's conception of the universe is rooted in superstition and poor science, mistaking perception for observation and contributing myriad misconceptions to the work they're doing. Not content merely to agitate within ISRA for her viewpoint, she very publicly left the Order and wrote a book, half tell-all, half philosophical counterargument to Herzog's vision. She sees no special place in the universe for humanity or indeed any other organism, sentient or otherwise, nor allowance for any sort of anthropic principle. Hers is not a bleak outlook but a wholeheartedly materialistic one. Held in contempt by some of the more spiritually oriented ISRAns, Otha himself has not seen fit to comment, leading some to wonder if he didn't plan for all this to happen from the beginning.

## RUNNING AN ISRA CAMPAIGN

ISRA is a school and a philosophy as much as it's an organization, but one of its primary functions is to help humanity. Clears are blessed and cursed with the ability to know the breadth and depth of humanity's greatnesses and follies, be they past, present, or possible. What ISRA does — the aid missions, the planning, the oft-unsolicited advice — is simply the manifestation of compassion ingrained into the order's institutional culture. Regardless of how complicated or strange the situation, an ISRAn's first impulse should be to ask "How can I help?"

But the universe is a very big place, and there are only so many ISRAns. Sometimes, even clears miss things. Sometimes, problems that are seen go underestimated. Sometimes, things just get in the way, be it a lack of access or a lack of resources, or even a lack of belief. People rarely enjoy being told their great idea is a terrible mistake, after all, even from people who can see the future. These situations, where a crisis looms and foresight hasn't already averted it, is where the heart of an ISRA campaign lies.

### WHAT DOES ISRA DO?

ISRA's fluid structure may seem ill-equipped to cope with large-scale problems. Many human organizations are fluid, though, with no distinct vertical hierarchy. Such organizations function not by having a top-down system where directives are issued from a small group in authority, but by having goals and drives shared by the whole of the community, who work together to achieve them. In short: ISRA campaigns can touch on practically any aspect of human existence, from the action-packed and exciting (dropping into hostile territory to recover data from an overrun outpost) to the subtle and emotional (hospice workers carrying out extraordinary last requests for the dying).

In all cases, though, ISRA brings a particular insight to their work. Possessing tremendous foresight on an institutional level, ISRAns naturally prefer to prevent disasters rather than respond to them, taking a proactive approach to things that haven't happened yet. For the Storyguide, this means even seemingly innocuous things, like setting up supply drops or leaving messages, can be tied intimately to larger, more dynamic, and dramatic events. ISRAns can be caught up in seemingly out-of-context situations but find that their needs were anticipated long ago by fellow ISRAn clears. This is an opportunity for Storyguides to run a story by the seat of their pants, adapting on the fly to unpredictable players

## PLAYING WITH FUTURES

The Psychocognition Mode permits clear to see the future. The *Least Resistance* power can allow clears to play through the next several minutes after using this power to declare at any point in this time period that everything was a vision of the future, and the clear can now play through the same situation again, knowing what happened the first time. In addition to providing the clear with potentially life-saving information about the near future, these visions can also interact with a Talent's dramatic editing. If the clear witnessed a Talent do something in their vision, reduce the cost for the Talent to use dramatic editing to help bring about this outcome by one Inspiration point, because, in one possible future, this event already happened.

Dealing with possible futures becomes even more complex if one of the characters' opponents is a clear who can use Psychocognition. It's possible that one of the characters and one of the characters' opponents both see the same possible future, meaning both sides, or at least both clears know how the next few minutes would go if neither side could see the future.

thanks to the fact that no matter what the characters do, a benefactor has likely foreseen it.

To ISRA, causal inertia is both a deadly enemy and a powerful tool. Trends in possibility and probability grow more powerful if they're casually (and causally) reinforced. After all, a few pebbles tumbling down a mountainside can quickly become an avalanche. Most events have multiple causes, if one tracks causality back far enough. There are only so many clears to go around, and only so many ISRAns working to contain those metaphorical avalanches. This is why it's so important to prepare, to build up one's own causal inertia, to offset the influences on whatever one is trying to prevent. Consider having a single, large, overarching threat, while revealing it slowly over the course of several episodes. Eventually, you can build to a more direct confrontation — one in which the players benefit from the legwork they've put in before without even realizing they were building to this moment. Over the course of the story, you can showcase the inertia of the threat, and at the climax, the inertia the players have built becomes clear, neutralizing it.

## THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE

The prospect of running a campaign built around characters who can see the future can be a little

daunting at first, but with the appropriate mindset things fall into place quickly. A Storyguide's first and most important asset is remembering clears don't live in the future. They have to push to see these things, and even then, they're only seeing possibilities. Don't grow over-concerned with little things like continuity. So, a clear saw a particular character in their vision, and that character was subsequently spaced out an airlock by unknown malefactors? That's just the butterfly effect in action: small changes, even imperceptible ones, produce large changes.

Instead of trying to construct a grand narrative, with moments written out well in advance and each leading directly into the next, let things be fluid. Allow moments to be fixed — a reactor melting down, a political assassination, an experiment gone awry, etc — but their causes and effects should be fluid. This will help you adjust to your players, who will undoubtedly do unexpected things in the course of the story. If you're focusing on Procedural gameplay, introduce clues as necessary, writing them down and keeping them internally consistent. If you want a structure of clues leading to further clues in classic whodunit style, make sure to include "trapdoors," moments when players who missed a vital clue can "fall" back into the line of evidence. Nothing kills drama and excitement faster than players who are unsure what to do next.

The good news is that you, as the Storyguide, have an incredibly powerful tool in an ISRA game — even if none of your players are playing a clairsentient, they are institutionally connected with and likely friends with *numerous* clears, all of whom are available to you as potential sources of plot hooks.

### Letters to Otha

Letters to Otha, to the uninitiated, reads like a nightmarish panopticon where privacy is an impossibility — and in anyone else's hands, it probably would be. To clears, however, privacy is already a thin veneer of politeness to begin with. When you can perceive the past, future, and distant places almost without meaning to, there's a certain degree of both openness and social fiction that comes with it. After all, every clear knows from personal experience that if one is doing something even a little interesting, one's likely to be observed by someone at some point; perhaps today, perhaps tomorrow, perhaps ten thousand years from now when clairsentients outnumber entire nations. Some react poorly to this, and shelter from hypothetical observers from past and future in Psi-opaque quarters or in difficult viewing conditions, but the majority simply learn to live with it, all the while pretending (as their peers do) that they've seen nothing worth commenting on. After a while, that little lie even begins to turn into the truth, because when there's no real purpose for gossip, there's no real joy in it either.

Letters to Otha provides a ready set of potential influences on the ongoing campaign. They're a source of aid, information, calls for help, and virtually anything you can think of. After all, the entire affair is simply *people*, spread across a galaxy, with the unique capacity to keep tabs on one another. Don't be shy about leaning into that web of connections, because it's far more than the three people a clear is looking after.

## Potential Campaigns

The following is a list of potential campaign seeds for an ISRA-centered game.

### Where No One Has Gone Before

Astrocartography has been a discipline for over a century, but ISRA has taken it to new heights. Not only is ISRA responsible for the lion's share of mapping out new stars, but with the Leviathan program they're beginning to take on some of the responsibility of physically exploring the stars as well. Not just Leviathan pilots, entire astrocartography teams hitchhike jump ships into the frontier, extending their vision light-years beyond what they'd be able to grasp from Earth. The frontier is vast and broad, and there are worlds enough for every would-be astrocartographer to not just name a world after their favorite band, but every song on every one of their albums. If you want to capture a Star Trek feel of a new planet every week, look no further.

### Echoes of the Past

Modern forensic science has achieved heights unimagined even in the fever dreams of early 21st Century stone-age forensics when false positives and other serious errors were disturbingly common. Now, investigators can sequence DNA and analyze traces of materials on the spot with tools they carry on their person, never mind tapping into surveillance networks. The age of the detective isn't quite dead, though — the human element will always be important when humans are the primary source of criminals — and none exemplify that stock role of the independent detective quite like the Stone-Turners. As the

name implies, this loose affiliation of ISRAns leave no stone unturned when it comes to solving mysteries, most of which are older than the people doing the work. Stone-Turners specialize in cold cases, investigating crimes decades out of date, without any real evidence to speak of, and consider it their duty to balance the scales of justice. They have their work cut out for them, for in the chaos of the Aberrant War, many dire offenses went unseen and unrectified. Violence and incarceration, however, are not common tools in the Stone-Turner arsenal. When it comes to justice served cold, they are most fond of the poetic variety.

### Pre-Rescue

For the generations that lived through the Aberrant War, chaos and disaster were a fact of life. Those who lived through those terrible years bear the scars not just physically but psychologically. Many elders still maintain large caches of emergency supplies, escape plans they can employ at the drop of a hat, and (where legal) means of defending themselves when governments lose their monopoly on violence. The same mindset informs Pre-rescue, less an organization and more a tendency within ISRA. Preparedness may seem simple for people who can see the future, but causality is a complicated mistress and even Otha (probably) can't see every future for *everyone*. Virtually every clear has a pre-rescue moment at some point, but some specialize in it to the point where they spend their entire lives on the road, moving from site to site just in time to warn the populace of a natural disaster or avert one caused by humans. These clears are not singlehandedly responsible for the tendency to perceive the sudden arrival of an ISRAn as a potential bad omen, but they are certainly a thumb on the scale.

# Paths and Edges

The following Path and Edges may not be unique to ISRA but are rarely found elsewhere.

## Jump Ship Pilot (Role)

**Prerequisites:** Clairsentient ISRAn, at least one dot in Psycholocation.

Many clears are content to view things from a distance. You are not one of those clears. You've endured the testing and training necessary to become a jump ship pilot, a group that even now is still a small and tight-knit family of thrillseekers. The job has a seemingly magnetic pull on those hungry for new experiences, and competition for a seat in an ARES pod is fierce. Not every trained jump ship pilot gets a full-time post, but it's something they all crave. Should they be lucky enough to get one, they push to be the best damned pilot they can be, and meanwhile their unlucky fellows push just as hard to prove they're worthy. Jump ship pilots often come across as entirely too enthused about what they do, like the stereotypical fighter pilot.

### Path Concepts

Hungry Rookie, Far-Traveled Veteran, Braggart Hotshot, Burnout Who's Seen Too Much

**Example Connections:** Other pilots, jump ship crewmates, colonial bigwigs, unusually patient scientists

**Skills:** Empathy, Enigmas, Pilot, Science

**Edges:** Always Prepared, Danger Sense, Enhanced Attunement, Favored Mode, Increased Tolerance (• to •••), Keen Sense, Leviathan's Favor (• to •••), Photographic Memory (• to •••)

#### Special Edge: Leviathan's Favor (• to •••)

**Prerequisite:** Jump Ship Pilot Path

Your character has a preternatural empathy with biotech jump ships. Most Leviathan crews, and crews of similar ships, often report a sense that the ship is more intelligent than it ought to be but jump ship pilots often find themselves the focus of a ship's "attention" due to the depth of the connection and the sheer amount of time spent within the ARES pod. Most of the time, this is merely incidental: the climate adjusts to your character's preference, computer tasks receive higher priority than normal, and so on. In emergency situations or pressing circumstances, however, the ship is often willing to move mountains to lend your character a hand. Gain +1 Enhancement to any shipboard action and add this Edge's dots to the number of roll attempts on complex actions for any actions influencing the ship or its systems.

Finally, your character may develop a Bond with her ship. Treat these Bonds like any other. Assume the ship always has a positive Attitude equal to dots in this Edge toward your character, and a dice pool

equal to Size + Edge dots. The ship may use successes in spendable Bond pools. The Storyguide is the ultimate arbiter of what form this takes.

## NON-CLAIRSENTIENT ISRAN (SOCIETY)

**Prerequisite:** Non-Clairsentient

Your character is a member of ISRA but is not a Clairsentient. While psions of other Aptitudes may dabble in Clairsentience via Auxiliary Modes, even they frequently cannot grasp the holistic nature of the holographic universe the Old Man and clears regularly discuss. Those discussions are far from the entirety of ISRA's purpose, however. Non-Clairsentient ISRAns are frequently those responsible for maintaining a connection to the here and now, acting as the pragmatic and grounded partner who reminds their fellows to keep their eyes on the ball. They often serve as go-betweens, practiced at taking the sometimes-abstruse visions of clears and rendering them into more prosaic language for outsiders. They also play important roles in steering the course of events, whether preventing disasters or ensuring that critical plans proceed as envisioned, even if they're not strictly speaking the ones that saw those events coming.

### PATH CONCEPTS

Talent Asset, Fellow-Traveler Psion, Latent Apprentice, Neutral True-Believer

**Example Connections:** Noetic Ethics Committee member, ascetic monk, muezzin bang diva, campus volunteers

**Skills:** Culture, Empathy, Enigmas, Humanity

**Edges:** Always Prepared (•), Artistic Talent (• to •••), Danger Sense (•) Enhanced Attunement (•) Go With the Flow (•••), Library (• to •••), Patron (• to •••)

### SPECIAL EDGE: GO WITH THE FLOW (•••)

**Prerequisite:** Non-Clairsentient ISRAn

Your character has spent enough time around ISRAns to have learned two things. The first is you have to be ready for everything. The second is you will never be ready for anything. Clears see things coming but often fail to get the meaning across to others, even those who understand their jargon and have a vague appreciation for what the experience of clairsentience is like, and their non-clairsentient fellows have to learn to adapt. Your character, through experience, has learned the knack of holding an expressed pre-formed idea in the back of her mind until it becomes clear, then rapidly interpreting and integrating an understanding of how it applies to the situation and acting almost without thinking.

When acting in the context of advance information (which need not be gleaned through psionic methods), you may opt to benefit from one of the following effects:

- Take a Miscellaneous Action and inflict Complication equal to successes on an appropriate roll (Storyguide's choice of dice pool) to a single target.
- Gain +3 Enhancement to a single action.
- Negate all Complications you would otherwise suffer for a single action.

You can only exploit any given forewarning once; however, if multiple prophecies are hanging over an individual situation, you may benefit from more than one, even in a single conflict. The Storyguide is the ultimate arbiter of whether or not foreknowledge applies in any given instance.

### NEW EDGE: HYPERPERCEPTIVE (••)

**Prerequisite:** Clairsentients only

Your character excels at rapidly intaking and processing sensory information. This is especially advantageous in the context of Clairsentience, allowing her to clearly identify and trace details of noetic potential that might be lost on other clears. Gain 2 Enhancement to all Attunement rolls, as well as to any rolls to establish or ride *dhikr*.

### FAN AL-BASIRA (• TO •••)

**Prerequisite:** Dexterity ••, Composure ••, and Psychocognition •

Your character has been trained in the ISRAn martial art *Fan al-Basira* ("The Way of Vision" or "Foresight"). This style, which employs foresight to preemptively react to attacks, was developed shortly after ISRA's founding, at the request of and with guidance from the Old Man himself. Influenced by Aikido and Baguazhang (as well as several other styles), Fan al-Basira is primarily concerned with quickly subduing and disarming opponents without causing permanent harm, employing throws, joint locks, and precise strikes to sensitive but non-critical parts of the body.

• **Offensive Avoidance:** Your character can not only evade an enemy's attack but do so in such a way that leaves the enemy off-balance and open to attack immediately thereafter. Whenever your character is attacked in close combat and the attack fails to beat your Defense, inflict a Complication equal to dots in this Merit. Until bought off, or until the end of the round, any attack against that enemy gains +1 Enhancement. After being attacked, the target may reflexively roll Close Combat (or Defense, if they're an Antagonist) to attempt to buy off the Complication.

•• **Preemptive Reaction:** Physical strength is not so important as understanding the appropriate time to employ it. While grappling, you may substitute Composure for Might for all rolls related to the grapple. In addition, gain access to the stunt *Violence Begets Suffering* (*variable successes*): Your foresight allows you to plan for the future, setting up your position relative to your opponent. Successes spent on this stunt are banked, to a maximum of your Psi Trait. When you escape from a grapple, add these successes to those remaining from the roll to do so for the purposes of purchasing additional Close Combat Stunts.

••• **Causal Inversion:** Your character is an expert at transforming defense into attack. When you take a full Defense, you may elect to respond to a close combat attack with a reflexive attack of your own. However, if successful, you may only purchase the *Disarm*, *Establish Grapple*, *Feint*, *Knockdown/Trip*, *Seize*, or *Shove* stunts. These attacks are resolved simultaneously, but you still benefit from your full Defense until after this turn, at which point your full Defense ends.

CHAPTER FOUR

# THE LEGIONS

"I come in peace. I didn't bring artillery. But I'm pleading with you, with tears in my eyes: If you fuck with me, I'll kill you all."
— General James Mattis, U.S. Marine Corps

Beyond every military's ceremony and ritual lurks an ugly truth: a military is an organized, professional force built for the purpose of applying lethal force to further political interests. The Legions' differentiating factor is the interests they represent are those of the United Nations Charter and humanity, not those of a single nation or ruling class. This doesn't make them immune to politics. On the contrary, it raises the political stakes of every Legionnaire's actions.

Consequently, the Legions operate under a microscope. Try as General Larssen may to keep her order independent, it remains beholden to the UN. Without UNMC sanction, the Legions would be a stateless military, and nations see such things as existential threats. Using the Legions' considerable force to solve problems — the function for which the order is designed — is, ironically, not always the best option.

As a career military officer, General Larssen has a pragmatic superstition around heraldry and associating psions with the legends of Prometheus. The story of a champion of humanity stealing fire from the gods resonates with predominantly-psychokinetic legionnaires, and many unit patches and symbols include stylized imagery from those legends — particularly fire, eagles, and rocky terrain. Larssen tacitly encourages this practice even though it's a minor deviation of UNMC regulations. Her own patch heraldry is a tongue of flame at the center of the Legions' seven-pointed star, representing her place as the first pyrokinetic at the heart of the psi order. Legionnaires assigned to the General's immediate command receive the patch and continue to wear a discrete version on their uniforms even after posting to other duties.

# UNFAIR ADVANTAGES

Innumerable OpNet debates place the Legions among humanity's best militaries. "Best" is highly subjective; the Legions certainly aren't the largest (China, UAN, and FSA) nor the most technologically advanced (Brazil in biotech, Nippon for hardtech). They can't claim to be leaders in aerospace (UAN, Northern Collective), wet navy (Australia, China), or vacuum navy (China, FSA) forces. But when comparing the combat capability of equally sized armies, then yes: the Legions are arguably humanity's best.

What these analyses often miss are the factors driving this superiority. Psions certainly help, yes, and having one-third of the Legion's 100,000 soldiers being noetically gifted puts more psions in the Legions than any other military. In fact, the Legions have almost as many psions as the next two largest psi orders combined, and more than the total of all the remaining psi orders. However, plenty of psions lose fights; other factors make the Legions exceptional.

**Selectivity.** The Legions don't run ads. Their actions speak for them. National militaries offer sales pitches about the benefits of enlistment. A Legions recruiter's foremost job is to discourage those who aren't psychologically fit for the order or who aren't committed to military service. It's true that the Legions' standards are less selective than other psi orders for both general qualifications and psionic latency, but even with the constant need to backfill casualties and expand the ranks, the Legions still turn away more applicants than they accept.

**Leadership.** Low-level command initiative has always been key to Legions tactics. NCOs receive training other forces would reserve for commissioned leaders. Commissioned officers' professional development comes at lower ranks than it would in most national militaries' tracks. This means any Legions commander can intelligently pursue the intent of her orders and improvise ways to capitalize on rapidly materializing opportunities without waiting for permission. She also has at least a modicum of political awareness.

**Troop quality.** Good leaders can do only so much with inferior soldiers. Fortunately, Legions Basic Training (LBT) and Advanced Specialty Training

## TLA WARNING

Like all militaries, the Legions are inordinately fond of acronyms and initialisms. A brief guide to those appearing here:

ADF: Australian Defense Force
AOR: Area of Responsibility
ARDEP: Australasian Regional Defense Pact
AST: Advanced Specialty Training
CO: Commanding Officer
EHALO: Extreme High Altitude/Low Opening
JAG: Judge Adjutant General
LBT: Legions Basic Training
LIC: Legion Intelligence Corps
LOBC: Legions Officer Basic Course
LOC: Legions Occupation Code
MP: Military Police
NCO: Non-Commissioned Officer
OPFOR: Opposing Force
RTF: Regimental Task Force
UNCMJ: United Nations Code of Military Justice
UNMC: United Nations Military Command
XO: Executive Officer

(AST) meld the traditional boot camp crucible with modern adult education theory and cutting-edge instructional technology. Measured by proficiency in basic job skills, freshly minted Legionnaires easily match any nation's soldiers. Selective recruiting practices also mean basic material is, on average, higher quality.

**Legionnaires before psions.** Every Legionnaire is equal in LBT and AST. Comparisons between psions and neutrals are inevitable, but the Legions instill unity by withholding the Prometheus Effect until every Legionnaire knows how to do her job without psi. This also filters those who aren't suited for the military lifestyle — or may be too unstable to handle triggering — before their dunkings. Moreover, Legions service uniforms don't indicate whether the wearer is psion or neutral; nor do the files that review boards use to select Legionnaires for promotion or special training. Psi is another tool or weapon, never a crutch.

**Morale and *esprit d'corps*.** The Legions are an all-volunteer force. Everyone in the ranks wanted to be there and had ample opportunity to quit along the way. Discipline and attitude problems still exist, but the lack of conscription means there are effectively no unwilling Legionnaires. Moreover, the Legions *know* they're the best there is at what they do. They can lose, but they'll make damn sure the other side pays for their win.

**Psi.** Psionics is a powerful force multiplier. It's badass to carry an invisible bulletproof shield and silent heavy weapons within yourself. Unlike other psi orders with around half their psions having Aptitudes other than from their order's Prometheus Chamber, around 80% of the Legions' 30,000 psions have PK as their Aptitude. The Legions might want more, but this would have several other psi orders producing more psions with their Aptitude for the Legions than they possess themselves! The 20% of psions with non-PK Aptitudes further diversifies the Legions' psi advantage. On average, one Legionnaire in every four-person strike team is a psion, with three to six non-PK psions per company — and all their neutral buddies and commanders train in how to best use those capabilities.

## EXCEPTION CASES

If a recruit's latency indicates she best fits an Aptitude other than PK, she still undergoes LBT and AST before shipping out to the appropriate order for triggering and instruction in her new powers. In addition to filtering out latents who aren't suited to military service, this indoctrinates her with loyalty to the Legions before another order can influence her. The other proxies grumble about this, but latents they send to the Legions for triggering bypass the military training, making non-Legions PKs less likely to abandon their original psi order.

Characters entering the Legions with prior military experience still undergo LBT and AST. They'll find it easier than their peers from the civilian world, but the General wants them to learn how to do things the Legions way. Prior service also helps a Legionnaire's chances for promotion, though she begins as a private regardless of her previous rank. If she was an officer before, the order usually sends her to the Legions Officer Basic Course as soon as she finishes AST, re-commissioning her upon LOBC graduation.

Occasionally, a psion comes to the Legions after triggering and service in another psi order. The Legions don't exactly discourage this, but the order scrutinizes such applicants closely. Policy forbids

cross-order recruits from using psi while undergoing LBT and AST. Exceptions exist for maintaining proficiency during their limited free time and for immediate lifesaving needs.

## SOLDIERS WITHOUT BORDERS

One oft-overlooked aspect of the Legions' existence is that all Legionnaires renounce their citizenship as part of their oath of service. They can go home again, though. Under UN treaty, enlistment carries a temporary citizenship abeyance with minimal obstacles to reinstatement when a Legionnaire musters out. "Minimal" varies by nation — the FSA's paperwork and fees are infamous, and Nippon's re-entry conditions are so onerous that repatriated Nihonjin ex-Legionnaires number in the single digits (and none are psions).

While serving, Legionnaires are legally agents of the UN and UNMC, with all travel and diplomatic privileges thereof. Those who leave the ranks honorably are also eligible automatically for Lunar and Austronesian Union citizenship. Those discharged dishonorably may find themselves nationless until they find a country willing to overlook their service records. In particular, Magyarorszag, Argentina, and Greater Siam are havens for disgraced ex-Legionnaires.

# LASER RIFLES ALL THE WAY DOWN

The Legions have a wide array of specialized units, but their millennia-old cornerstone remains the infantry. Every Legionnaire learns personal combat fundamentals in LBT, while LOBC teaches every commissioned officer to be an infantry platoon leader in case she must take command *in extremis*. Even non-combat Third Legion troops learn these skills.

The basic infantry building block is the *fire team* or *strike team:* a lance corporal and three privates. A *section* — three strike teams under a corporal — is the smallest unit to work independently. Despite entertainment media's co-option of "strike team" for an independent group of psion adventurers, the Legions rarely assign a lone strike team or section to a task. Their NCOs are too junior for independent command.

A *platoon* has three sections plus a command element led by a lieutenant with a sergeant (titled "platoon sergeant") as her advisor. Non-infantry specialists attach to the platoon's command element as needed. Above this is the *company,* composed of three or four platoons commanded by a captain, with a lieutenant as executive officer ("XO"), a staff sergeant or warrant officer (titled "company sergeant major") as the CO's advisor, and a tiny administrative staff.

The *battalion* is the largest permanent unit beneath a Legion itself, and the smallest capable of supporting itself in the field. A lieutenant colonel commands four infantry companies and a headquarters company with administrative, communication, reconnaissance, combat engineering, and fire support assets. A support company, semi-permanently attached from Third Legion, provides maintenance, supply, medical, and transportation functions.

The same basic structure holds throughout the Legions. Vehicle-focused units organize around platoons of four to six vehicles and go up from there. Aviation (and space) units call their six-aircraft platoon equivalents *flights*, matching *squadrons* to companies and *wings* to battalions.

The Legions also draws smaller units from different disciplines to accomplish a specific task. For example, a *company task force* formed to clear a road through hostile terrain may be a tank platoon for heavy firepower, two infantry platoons for security and reconnaissance, and an engineer platoon to clear mines and shore up bridges along the way. The largest are *regimental task forces,* formed to coordinate multiple battalions in the field against major threats. Above the battalion or RTF level, the next echelon is the Legion itself, then Legions HQ.

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Every unit answers to a higher command authority, up to General Larssen, who answers to the UNMC. The chain of command means every Legionnaire knows who's authorized to give her orders, and every officer knows what resources she can task. Legionnaires risk discipline for insubordination if outright refusing orders from outside their chain of command but are within their rights to request the order be routed through proper channels.

Each unit can call upon its parent unit for support, within reason. The Legions hew to the principle of *economy of force*, meaning leaders should use the minimum amount of resources possible to get the job done while preserving their troops and materiel. A platoon

| GROUND | AEROSPACE | TYPICAL COMMAND/ STAFF ROLE |
|---|---|---|
| | Commissioned Ranks | |
| General | Air/Space Marshal* | Psi Order |
| Brigadier | Flight Commodore | Legion |
| Colonel | Group Captain | Legion staff or RTF |
| Lieutenant Colonel | Wing Commander | Battalion |
| Major | Squadron Leader | Battalion staff |
| Captain | Flight Lieutenant | Company |
| Lieutenant | Flying Officer | Platoon |
| | NCO Ranks | |
| Master Warrant Officer | Master Warrant Officer | Battalion NCO |
| Warrant Officer | Warrant Officer | Company/battalion NCO |
| Staff Sergeant | Flight Sergeant | Company NCO |
| Sergeant | Sergeant | Platoon NCO |
| Corporal | Corporal | Section |
| Lance Corporal | Senior Spacer/Aircrafter** | Strike team |
| | Enlisted Ranks | |
| Private 1st Class | Leading Spacer/Aircrafter** | |
| Private | Spacer/Aircrafter** | |

* This is a theoretical rank, reserved in case General Larssen's eventual replacement comes from the Legions' aerospace branch. This individual would be titled "Air Marshal" or "Space Marshal" depending on whether they earned their rank in atmospheric or space flight.

** These aerospace ranks use different titles to denote space and atmospheric flight specializations. Informal address is "Spacer" or "Aircrafter" without prefix.

leader seeking artillery support against a single foe is likely to receive counseling on this principle — unless that foe is a Terat-class Aberrant, in which case there is no overkill, only "open fire" and "reload."

## UNIT IDENTITY

Each unit has a distinct identity. Strike teams and sections lack formal designations, using their leaders' as identifiers (e.g., "Van Sickle's section"). Platoons are numbered ordinally within the company. Companies receive letter designations which are ordinal within the battalion (though some variations exist as relics of earlier nomenclature schemes, which is how a battalion can consist of K, L, and M Companies). Company lettering invariably drives nicknames: various "A Companies" go by "Assassins," "Arbiters," "Avengers," "Arquebusiers," and "Armadillos."

Battalions are numbered and named ordinally by troop type. For example, the Legions have 1st Infantry Battalion, 2nd Infantry Battalion, etc., but they also have 1st Cavalry, 1st Armored Cavalry, 1st Combat Engineer, 1st Artillery, and so forth. If a battalion has special mobility capabilities, a parenthetical suffix indicates these: 19th Infantry (Light), 6th Cavalry (Marine), 7th Artillery (Mountain). Of note, Legions Cavalry battalions are VARG formations while *Armored* Cavalry units operate tanks, *Air* Cavalry units fly VTOLs, and (Marine) contextually refers to either vacuum marines in Seventh Legion or wet marines everywhere else. Each battalion possesses unique heraldry (flags and shoulder patches), nickname, motto, and social traditions, a cultural element common to many nations' regimental heritages.

Exceptions to these naming schemes generally trace their lineage to UN Home Guard or affiliated national units that joined the order at its formation. For example, the 136th Reconnaissance Squadron was once the Royal Norwegian Air Force's 136th Interceptor Squadron. It still bears that unit's

heraldry and a disproportionate number of its personnel come from the Northern Collective. Similarly, the Legion Intelligence Corps deliberately retains the singular 'Legion' from its origins in then-Captain Larssen's UN Home Guard concept.

Administrative shorthand usually identifies company and battalion: B Company, 12th Armored Cavalry Battalion is abbreviated to "B/12th ArmCav." If the writer needs to further identify 1st platoon and the Fourth Legion to which the battalion belongs, the abbreviation is "1/B/12th ArmCav/IV."

### Rank in the Legions

Militaries are hierarchical. A member's rank denotes her authority and responsibility and implies her leadership or technical qualifications. Promotion is linear within commissioned and non-commissioned structures. Every major spent her time as a lieutenant and captain but didn't have to work her way up through non-commissioned ranks.

The greatest difference between commissioned and enlisted troops is authority. Commissioned officers are leaders and administrators; their duties include command responsibilities. Enlisted personnel are technical specialists first (even if their technical focus is killing people and breaking stuff). Through promotion, enlisted troops become non-commissioned officers (NCOs) with increasing supervisory duties within their areas of specialty. Senior NCOs are administrators and advisors to commissioned officers. Exceptional enlisted soldiers and NCOs can earn commissions, a process more common in the Legions than most national forces.

Breaking with the UNMC, the Legions align with the Austronesian Union's military rank structure. Ostensibly a means of supporting interoperability with host nation forces, this is one of the General's many subtle assertions of her order's independence. The Legions use separate rank titles for ground and aerospace forces. To the traditionalists' dismay, naval ranks are not in use: "vac" naval forces use aerospace ranks and "wet" naval units use ground force ranks. Additionally, although the Legions follow Austronesian structures, they make a point of difference by using the American-style "loo-tenant" pronunciation, rather than Australia's "leff-tenant."

## Mission Spaces

The Legions began as a United Nations experiment with a nationless peacekeeping force. The UN Home Guard's early years saw contingents deployed across the solar system to protect human rights, prop up diplomacy, and support struggling governments in disaster relief against both natural and human-caused (or Aberrant-caused) hazards. These remain key Legions missions today, though fights against Aberrants and aliens overshadow them in media coverage. The order also continually plans for war, preparing to fight alongside or against every possible ally or opponent — even those who may be one and the same.

### Human Rights Protection

The Legions have overthrown only one national government, a mission which the UN now regrets for the precedent it set. In 2111, the Hmong State embarked on a campaign of genocide against its Laotian population, couching it as counterinsurgency after decades of unrest fomented by Laos. The latter country itself attempted intervention, only to see Aberrant War mechano-beast-men decimate its army. Facing a rogue nation with an arsenal of remnant novatech weapons, the UN sent in its psions. The resulting three-month campaign brought down the Hmong State's military junta — and proved the Legions' capacity for forcible regime change.

Most human rights protection missions don't reach the Hmong Intervention's scale, but they are more common than the average 22nd-century citizen would like to believe. Under Resolution 217 and its subsequent amendments, the UN promotes a broad array of individual liberties and economic rights. Ideally, member nations ensure these for their citizens, with legal systems and relief efforts being the first remedies. When ideals fail, UN investigatory and enforcement agencies take over, calling in the Legions when force is necessary.

Human rights protection missions require discretion and precision: by definition, innocent lives are *always* in the line of fire, and the UN prefers public trials to "shot while resisting arrest." The Legions have broken slave labor operations and human trafficking networks, taken down warlords diverting humanitarian aid, and dismantled police conspiracies to frame political rivals and extract confessions through torture. Large operations may require months-long commitments as UN investigators gradually disassemble organized crime or corrupt government structures. Smaller problems, or

small elements of the big investigations, can be hasty affairs, planned and executed in hours before a target can slip away or bury (sometimes literally) the evidence.

## PEACEKEEPING

Despite humanity's ostensible unity, the UN remains involved in peacekeeping efforts. It's a comfortingly familiar assignment for many senior Legionnaires who began their careers with the UN Home Guard. Brushfire wars periodically erupt throughout Asia, Eastern Europe, and Sudamérica. The UN tries to avoid the appearance of heavy-handedness, but war crimes and major refugee movements draw its attention, as do smaller conflicts with the capacity to spiral into major wars. In such situations, UN forces serve as neutral arbiters and, if necessary, enforcers of the peace process.

Peacekeeping duty is a long-term deployment, with units serving 12 to 18 months on the "blue line." It's heavy on civil affairs work: mediating disputes, training local military and law enforcement authorities, and interacting with the local population to identify problems and gather intelligence. Violence is uncommon and sudden, often catching Legionnaires in the crossfire rather than targeting them directly. In 2123, the Legions are part of UN peacekeeping missions in the Philippines, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, the Shatter, and several points on the Chinese/Bharati Commonwealth borders. The next likely spots for deployments are Mars and New Tampa, the latter of which may bring the Legions and FSM into direct conflict.

## DISASTER RELIEF

Heavy weapons rarely do much good against disasters, but militaries bring many other capabilities to the table. Accustomed to moving through and operating in austere environments, they can help stabilize a situation until civil authorities mobilize. The Legions' tradition of disaster assistance is literally older than the order — their first near miss with exposure came in 2103, when a platoon of PKs aborted its training maneuvers to help contain a wildfire near Coober Pedy.

Disaster relief missions are time-critical, characterized by hasty planning and execution based on imperfect intelligence. Top priority is saving lives. Depending on the situation, this can involve anything from mass evacuations to structural collapse rescue to containing a deadly chemical spill. The next priority is stabilization, preventing the situation from getting worse. After that comes saving property and preserving the environment. Later recovery and rebuilding are rarely Legion assignments — other UN bodies and national governments are better suited to those tasks — but the Legions may get involved if the situation needs long-term UN peacekeeping. Disaster relief is Sixth Legion's post-*Esperanza* daily routine.

Disaster relief duty is almost always a rush mission, with initial assignment going to the units who can get there and help the fastest. If possible, and if it will matter, follow-on assignments go specifically to medical and engineering units from Third Legion. Legionnaires go armed for self-protection regardless of the disaster's apparent cause. Some people don't appreciate or recognize psion help, and there's always a chance an Aberrant was behind the incident.

## ABERRANT DEFENSE

All the psi orders share the goal of protecting Earth from the Aberrants, but for the Legions as General Larssen originally created them, it's *the* mission, not an afterthought. Regular intelligence reports keep leaders informed on the capabilities and agendas of known Prime Threat and Terat-class Aberrants, while training bulletins emphasize protection from, and neutralization of, newly observed Aberrant powers.

The Legions actively hunt Aberrants throughout human space. Fifth and Sixth Legions regularly clash with low-powered Aberrants emerging from the Blight, *la Blessure*, and the Plaguelands. Fourth Legion stands poised to back them up, or to stomp out incursions appearing in other trouble spots, and has committed a large portion of its troops alongside Seventh Legion to the battle for Khantze Lu Ge. First and Second Legions don't have as much regular contact with Aberrants, but they're equally swift to respond to incursions.

Counter-Aberrant missions can be intricately planned over months, with every contingency accounted for, or they can be no-notice hot drops into dying cities. The one constant is that complacency kills. Aberrant powers and tactics are always evolving (or mutating). The Legionnaires who survive are those who can adapt on the fly to threats they've never seen before.

## EXTRATERRESTRIAL DEFENSE

Until 2122, humanity's contact with hostile aliens was limited to the Chromatic threat at Karroo Station, a situation with which Seventh Legion was coming to grips before the Upeo disappearance. During the years without teleporters, the Legions' planning staff gamed out many scenarios, ranging from Qin biosphere hijacking to a full-scale invasion by alien space bats. The launch of the Leviathans brought renewed focus to

these contingencies, and the Legions were not entirely unprepared for the Chromatic assault on the solar system. Subsequent contact with the Coalition, revelations of hostile factions within Qinshui politics, and discoveries such as Ivdel and Scream underscore the importance of the Legions' system defense and extrasolar campaign plans.

The Legions' greatest challenge in fighting aliens is scale. Only Seventh Legion has significant space combat capability, and even it is built to support and protect surface forces rather than to kill opposing fleets. The Legions lack the fleet carriers and battleships of China or the FSA, and they're unlikely to have the funds or personnel to make such investments in the coming years, especially when any such allocations would compete with the UN Navy's own expansion needs. For now, power projection in the void is outside the Legions' grasp. The order must content itself with skirmishing, reconnaissance, and escort duty, relying on national navies to form the fleets needed against threats like the Coalition ark.

Seventh Legion owns the extraterrestrial defense mission. With the galaxy appearing increasingly hostile, detachments now accompany every UN extrasolar mission. The General recognizes Seventh's force strength is woefully inadequate for the rapidly expanding threat environment, but building its capabilities takes time and no other Legion has trained military spacers she can divert as reinforcements. Until the training and construction pipelines can catch up, Seventh holds a lonely vigil among the stars.

### ROGUE PSION SUPPRESSION

Neither Æon, the UN, nor the Legions advertise it widely, but the Legions have a significant role in apprehending psions who become major threats. Even after the Aberrant War and two decades of public psion activity, a surprising number of law enforcement agencies across human space aren't up to the task of bringing in a criminal who can hack security systems or flash-boil eyeballs with his brain. Every psi order has a group capable of bringing its own rogues to heel but fighting other psions is a rare assignment. For the Legions, it's every other Wednesday's training schedule.

The Chitra Bhanu purge ranks with the Hmong Intervention among things the Legions have done that keep other people up at night. It remains the largest recorded psion-on-psion battle and, participation of Orgotek and Norça notwithstanding, indisputably proved the Legions' proficiency for fighting other psions. This led directly to the Upeo's flight in 2115 and remains a concern for every proxy. The Legions' voluminous war plans certainly have a few classified files devoted to taking down each of the other psi orders.

On a smaller scale, the Legions act only in extreme cases. Psion criminals can commit a surprising amount of mischief before the UN intervenes, which usually requires a national government to request aid. The exception is rogue or former Legionnaires, particularly those who commit war crimes. First Legion's Military Police Corps specializes in tracking and apprehending these offenders, and happily drags along any other Legionnaire in the vicinity who might be useful.

## GREEN FORCES

On UNMC tactical maps, blue represents UN forces, red depicts enemies, and green indicates non-UN allied units. This centuries-old practice informs both formal documentation and military idioms. "Green forces" are friends — at least for today.

### AUSTRALIA

The Legions were born Down Under and remain headquartered there. It's no surprise the Australian Defense Force is the Legions' closest partner military, with the other members of the Australasian Regional Defense Pact along for the ride. The ADF was the UN Home Guard's training partner; extending that relationship to the Legions was a seamless process once the politicians overcame their initial psion panic. Today, most ADF troops have spent their entire careers working alongside Legionnaires and *every* Legionnaire knows at least a few "diggers." The recent election of several former uniformed partners to Australian government offices also gives the Legions global political influence independent of the UN or Æon.

The Legions' presence hasn't been an unmitigated boon for the ADF. With humanity's largest concentration of psionic warfighters ready to defend the continent, the government has assumed the Legions will always be there, and recent Australian Army and Aerospace Force spending shows this complacency. General Larssen has cautioned against this trend but it's taken several failed readiness reviews to get the message through. It's not just an issue of national defense capability, as the ADF is the Legions' primary opposing force — the simulated enemy against which

the Legions train. An unprepared OPFOR means ineffective training for Legionnaires.

The General's other twitch about the Legions' relationship with Australia is the ADF's familiarity with psions. Joint operations throughout ARDEP member territory are common, and the Legions and the ADF fight near-seamlessly when they're teamed in UN missions. The ADF is probably the world's most adept military at integrating psions, a trend aided by the number of ex-Legionnaires who've accepted Australian citizenship and entered national service. This also means it's the force most capable of beating the Legions in a real fight. Such is the price of trust and alliance.

## NIPPON

Despite the Nihonjin government's stance on psions, the nation's military is surprisingly cozy with the Legions. Australia's military cooperation with Nippon allows the Legions to ride ADF coattails in working with the Nihonjin Ministry of Defense, opening the door for mutual respect that quietly undercuts Nihonjin government policy. The relationship is closest between Seventh Legion and the Nihonjin Air Force and High Fleet. Influenced by Japanese expatriate psions, over half of whom join the Legions, Fourth Legion units stationed around the Pacific Rim frequently adopt neosamurai and roninpunk style (partially to tweak the Ministry's nose). Legion money spends as well as anyone else's, too, and much of the order's hardtech armament comes from Nihonjin suppliers.

## SUDAMÉRICA

Despite the legendary personality clashes between the General and the Pai, the Legions are well regarded in much of the Norça's home territory. Most Sudamérican nations welcome Fifth Legion and, by extension, the rest of the order. The Legions' largest training venue outside Australia is Bolivia, enabling Legionnaires to learn both mountain and

jungle warfare. The unwritten rule is that both the Norça and the local intelligence agencies — especially the *Yana Llanthu* — will be watching everything the Legions do, so First Legion sends its own intelligence and counterintelligence troops here to stretch their muscles. Colombia and Belize vie for the title of nation hosting the most Legionnaires on leave.

## MARS

While the planet isn't united as a true paranational ally would be, almost every Martian polity is favorably disposed toward the Legions, regardless of its parent nation's stance. From 2111 to 2113, the order fought a grueling campaign to rid the Red Planet of several spawn forces sent by the Colony to establish a beachhead. General Larssen herself led the regimental task force in the final push eradicating the infestation, killing one prime threat and driving another into unknown interstellar space. This campaign was one of the driving factors behind Seventh Legion's creation. Martians everywhere remain grateful. Today, from its headquarters at Robinson Station, Seventh trains with and against the space marines and vac fleets of a dozen nations.

## QIN HOUSES

The Legions' ties to the Qin are complex. Terrestrial military relations with a potential rival or enemy are filtered through UN diplomatic protocols, while Qin social and governmental structures impose their own barriers. Nevertheless, the Legions enjoy cordial relations with several Qin Houses. Military personnel exchanges began in 2114 with Legion staff officers and senior NCOs serving six-month tours as liaisons to the militaries of Houses K'un and Tung Jen, while equivalent Qin reciprocally observed Legions HQ and Second Legion.

During the Upeo absence, stranded representatives engaged in joint defense planning with their respective hosts. The result today is less than a formal treaty but more than simple mutual respect. Qin liaisons serve on the Legions HQ, Second, Fourth, and Seventh Legion planning staffs, while the Legions represent UNMC to every friendly House's armed forces. Joint exercises have proven the partners' ability to work alongside one another. The next experiment is unit integration. B/5th Cavalry/II currently hosts soldiers from Houses Tung Jen, Ken, and K'un, as well as the first two Qin exchange officers to graduate LOBC. Cerulean Spearbreaker Mind K'un ("Lieutenant Spear") leads 3rd Platoon, while Slate Hundred-Eyed Society Shi Ho ("Lieutenant Hundred") is the company's XO.

## PSI ORDERS

The Legions work well with most other orders' paramilitary and security components. Even if policies and personalities clash, professional standards demand cooperation and a unified front. Relations with two orders go beyond that, though.

Between them, Orgotek and Norça supply almost all the Legions' biotech. The Legions also employ the second largest EK population after Orgotek itself. Beyond the business relationships and cross-training, Fifth Legion works in both orders' home territories. This could (and does) create friction, but Fifth's leadership is adept at diplomacy. For their part, the troops on both sides appreciate their opposite numbers' competence. Joint training is a regular schedule element and friendly competition is constant. The rest of the Legions benefit from the mutual respect Fifth nurtures.

# RED FORCES

If a military exists to impose political decisions by force, its every action is political. The Legions have made their share of enemies, both as enforcers of UN mandates and through their own acts.

## THE FSA

If the Legions have a national nemesis, it's North America's fascist regime. The FSA's Aberrant War scars lead it to see all psions as national security threats. Psychokinetics don't viscerally scare federal leaders the way clairsentients or telepaths do. Rather, they're walking challenges to the state's monopoly on lethal force. To the FSM and CSA, the Legions are an uncontrolled military concern, and are therefore rogue and dangerous.

The FSA uses the Legions' Aberrant Suppression Treaty as a combination of cost savings and intelligence opportunity. Every Fifth Legion operation in the LAST Zone is a task the FSM doesn't have to handle; every Thunderbolt casualty dies in a Federal soldier's place. Simultaneously, surveillance overflights and long-range sensors gather data on everything the Legions do, keeping a small army of analysts and researchers busy. Outside LAST Zone garrisons, Legionnaires face heavy restrictions on movement, purchasing, and communication, as well as constant surveillance. Authorities justify this low-level harassment of neutral and psion troops alike as a public safety measure — after all, they certainly can't tell which Legionnaire might be a volatile psychological casualty with an invisible arsenal at his disposal.

The Legions' growing respect among citizens, particularly the Blight's second-class citizens and unrecs, is a problem for both the order and the FSA. An increasing number of Legionnaires on LAST duty hold Trumerican, NRM, or NorLights sentiments, either through contact with sympathetic citizens or because of their own encounters with state harassment. Discipline hasn't slipped yet, at least, not so far Fifth Legion HQ can't smooth things over, but it's worn thin. Legions HQ has plans for forcibly recovering all Legionnaires from Federal territory if the FSA turns openly hostile.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

The Hmong Intervention soured many neighboring governments on the UN and the Legions. If the UN used its pet psychic warriors to crush one regime, who might be next? The region's center of anti-Legion sentiment is the reunited Laos, but Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Malaysia all have unwritten policies shunning the order. Legion Intelligence Corps suspects the Ministry of keeping these resentments smoldering.

## ARGENTINA

General Santander's regime can always find a place for another disgraced Legionnaire who wants to profit from his training. This alone would earn Argentina the Legions' collective distaste, but Sudamérica's pariah nation is also the Western Hemisphere's spawning pool for private military corporations with low ethical standards. Santander is a master of plausible deniability and has avoided giving the UN enough evidence to stage a full-scale intervention, but Legionnaires across the solar system can share stories of going up against Argentine-based mercenaries. The Legions are officially unwelcome in the country, thanks in part to several of their former comrades having attained high positions in the Argentine national security apparatus.

## GLOBAL EXPEDITERS

Headquartered in Latvia, Global Expediters is a century-old holding company for private military assets. Its current components include infantry units Wolfpack International and Ferhan's Regiment, Battlegroup One's privately-owned tanks, elite aviation unit Jumpmaster, and executive protection firms Steel Curtain and Feral City. The roster changes regularly, with corporate leaders breaking up units that attract too much scrutiny, changing commanders, and creating new formations.

Legionnaires had faced Global Expediters forces on several occasions, but the company was just another file entry until 2115. Following General Larssen's restructuring of Fourth Legion, Global Expediters' board of directors elected the *Vigiles'* former commander, Çelik Marangoz, as its chair. Under Marangoz's leadership, the company has aggressively recruited disgruntled Legionnaires, including many of the of the Fourth's other leaders who resigned in 2114. There doesn't seem to be an overarching anti-Legion agenda, but corporate forces are generally hostile and out to prove something.

## PSI ORDERS

The Legions' once-strong rapport with the Upeo hasn't turned lethal, but it's struggling. Reciprocal

mistrust and a sense of betrayal permeate both orders' leadership echelons and Proxy Atwan assists or cooperates with the Legions only at explicit UN request. Atwan's ill-feelings are exacerbated by the large number of Upeo who left the order after the exile ended and joined the Legions for a chance to take the fight to the Chromatics. At lower levels, Legionnaires and Upeo relate better than their leaders. Those who were friends before 2116 are working to repair damage, and the new teleporter Legionnaires don't forget their former colleagues, even if they no longer share their views. These low-level connections build a web of networks between the two psi orders, which both proxies are aware of, but which neither has yet used.

Beyond this, the Legions' global remit brings operations to every psi order's backyard. This causes special problems when orders and their host governments enjoy close ties. Norça is particularly touchy, but the greatest and most common friction is with the Ministry due to ongoing clashes of Chinese and Australian foreign policy.

# HOLDING THE CHAINS OF COMMAND

Succession of command — the capacity for lower-level personnel to assume leadership seamlessly when commanders are incapacitated — is essential to any military. The General has done her best to ensure no one person, including herself, is the Legions' single point of failure. Nevertheless, some personalities enjoy (or endure) prominence within the order.

## GENERAL SOLVEIG LARSSEN

Born in Stockholm in 2063, Solveig Larssen came of age amid post-Aberrant Exodus poverty and reconstruction. She speaks little of her youth, save to say that when she enlisted in the *Svenska Armén*, it looked like the least bad path to escape her birth circumstances. A keen intellect and aptitudes for languages and tactics led to advanced training, several deployments with UN peacekeeping missions, and eventual selection for the foreign exchange program at the United Republic's Sandhurst Military Academy.

The late 21st century's militaries were rigidly authoritarian. Senior officers micromanaged even the smallest operations, while sovereignty concerns hamstrung joint UN missions. Larssen, commissioned among the first cohort of officers in the newly-formed Northern Collective Army, swiftly made a name for herself in both NCA and UNMC circles as a brilliant iconoclast. Her master's thesis argued UNMC peacekeeping would continue to fail, wasting lives and money, while its troops were hobbled by bureaucracy and beholden to national interests above the UN Charter. Under the sponsorship of UN Secretary-General Murrigan, the Home Guard Project was her chance to prove her theories. Senior officers from several nations quietly lent her advice and political coverage, hoping to reap some advantage in reforming their own forces, but the execution was all hers.

Today, Larssen is the Legions' greying alpha lioness. She's spent four decades in uniform, enough for retirement and then some in any national force, even without the significant proportion of wartime duty. Even with a proxy's longevity and vitality, she's nearing exhaustion, and none of her proteges individually have the combination of vision, leadership, and noetic power to replace her. Her family life keeps her stable; she's a member of a polyamorous group marriage collective, an arrangement that her example is making increasingly common among Legionnaires who want to ensure continuity of family for their children in case they're killed in action. She and her partners own an aquaculture corporation in Tasmania. Her daughter, born in 2099, is one of the collective's six children.

## COLONEL ROBERT LINSEY MARSDEN

Orgotek discovered Robert Linsey Marsden in his Blight hometown, identified him as a strong latent psychokinetic, and brokered his emigration from the FSA as a favor to the Legions. Happy to escape both the police state and his postapocalyptic upbringing, Marsden eagerly took to military life. He displayed an uncanny aptitude for predicting enemy maneuvers, possibly due to his auxiliary Telepathy potential, and swiftly earned a commission and rose through the ranks. Preferring to use his middle name with his peers because he believes it sounds more 'Aussie', Linsey's last command was the prestigious 3rd Infantry Battalion, First Legion's ceremonial unit and guards of Legions HQ and Sydney.

Marsden now is the Legions' senior liaison to the UN and the Æon Trinity. He retains the gruff demeanor of a field commander, though he can — with effort — temper it around the diplomats. Deeply suspicious of Æon's

## LEGION LEADERSHIP

**First Legion: Brigadier Marilyn Jardeleza.** Filipino psychokinetic, military intelligence officer. Does double duty as General Larssen's chief of staff and designated successor; they've been friends long enough to read each other's minds. Divorced single mother of two teenagers.

**Second Legion: Brigadier Erkki "Erik the Red" Seppanen.** Finnish psychokinetic, combat engineer. Smarter than his brawler's public image suggests, with an encyclopedic knowledge of his Legion's deployments, missions, and personnel.

**Third Legion: Flight Commodore Wiremu "Warhorse" Hendrickson.** Maori-heritage New Zealander, neutral VTOL pilot. Technical genius whose social graces shut down when his mind is fully engaged.

**Fourth Legion: Brigadier Aziz Rostami.** Persian psychokinetic, armor officer. Competitive and short-tempered, with manners more icily polite as his anger grows. Probably the Legions' best senior tactician.

**Fifth Legion: Brigadier Iago Salera.** Colombian neutral, logistician. Extensive family business and financial connections throughout Sudamérica. Barely passes his annual physical but a faster and more accurate shot than appearances suggest.

**Sixth Legion: Brigadier Gianetta Mossalo.** Italian clairsentient, military historian. Identified as latent and recruited while conducting research at Legions HQ, then fast-tracked for promotion over senior combat veterans. The least military-minded Legion commander but the one most willing to innovate.

**Seventh Legion: Flight Commodore Koji "Tengu" Amano.** Australian psychokinetic, hybrid fighter pilot. Ethnically and culturally Japanese (see **Terra Firma**, p. 55). Acclaimed poet under a variety of OpNet aliases.

agendas, he figures working with the organization is the best way to keep an eye on it. The chain of command for Legionnaires assigned to Æon missions at UN request runs through his office, and he personally briefs those who may be headed into particularly sketchy duties.

### WING COMMANDER GENEVIÉVE "OYA" AFOLAYAN

A neutral aviator may seem an odd commander for the Legions' special operations component, but Geneviéve Afolayan is as unconventional as the missions she now oversees. She started her military career as an infantrywoman in UAN service, joining the Legions after being identified as a strong latent psion. She trained as a VTOL pilot but declined triggering, afraid of losing her edge by relying too much on psi. Like most Legions officers, she spent several years as an NCO before commissioning.

Afolayan is a plain-spoken, mirthful woman outside the cockpit and an implacable force of nature when she's flying. She spent years flying Fourth Legion's Strike Command troops into and out of danger before taking command of them. Those who've ridden with her know that while they may get blown out of the sky riding with her, she'll never leave a landing zone until the last Legionnaire is aboard. She's survived four crashes and brought back six more aircraft that shouldn't have been airworthy, lending credence to her belief she may be getting some advantage from her latent psi.

## DISCHARGED

The Legions' base enlistment contract is three years, with commissioning adding another three-year commitment (more for specialties requiring rare and expensive advanced training). Although the order enjoys the highest retention rate of any human military, many Legionnaires have left the ranks since 2105 — not always voluntarily. This section looks at a few of the most famous and infamous.

### ENITAN KAMAU

After the General herself, Enitan Kamau may be the best-known Legionnaire in human space. From the Legions' first appearance until her retirement in 2119, she was the order's lead public affairs officer, responsible for shaping humanity's opinion of the psychokinetics. She's since become an Australian media

fixture. She frequently appears on news shows as a military affairs commentator but is more popular as the lead presenter of Black Ops League, a competition in which teams of amateur athletes and recently discharged veterans confront a variety of tactical and tradecraft scenarios.

Kamau was a founding member of the UN Home Guard and was one of the first latent PKs who General Larssen identified and triggered. Her prior experience in the UAN's armored corps made her instrumental in developing Legions cavalry doctrine. She earned her spurs in covert Aberrant suppression in the Outback before reluctantly assuming PAO duties, but after two decades in front of the cameras, she admits it was a more natural fit.

### MATIJA FILIPOV

Sixth Legion recruiters identified Matija Filipov as a powerful latent PK, but Filipov wanted little to do with a soldier's life. They were, however, desperate to escape the Shatter, and the recruiter said the Legions had plenty of noncombat jobs. Filipov filled out the enlistment preference form by checking the boxes for everything that might provide training in a marketable trade. The strategy paid off: after LBT came culinary school, and Filipov finished their enlistment as the executive chef at Legions HQ. Holding to their promise to themself, Filipov mustered out and opened The Living Kitchen, which quickly became one of Sydney's trendiest restaurants. Serving Legionnaires receive a modest discount — but anyone who honorably musters out of the order receives a full dinner for six on the house.

Filipov is a naturally gifted chef but their fame comes from their use of PK in the kitchen. They pioneered the Filipov espresso technique, which uses Selective Permeability to perfectly aerate the foam atop the beverage. Their less-refined techniques are cornerstones of Legion food preparation in austere environments. General Larssen, whose own hobby is PK-enabled cooking, is Filipov's foremost patron and student.

### DAVID ADAMS

Exceptional fuckery is required for the General to implant-block a Legionnaire's psi in the process of drumming him out of the order. Lieutenant Colonel Adams exceeded even Larssen's considerable limits in the Mombasa Incident that ultimately saw the dishonored 9th Infantry Battalion stricken from the Legions' rolls. Adams faced court-martial alongside all but one of his company commanders. The court found insufficient evidence to apply the death penalty, but stripped him of his UN commission, pension, and ancillary privileges — including access to lethal psi powers. Adams once believed he could game the system, but the antitamper measures in his multiple redundant psionic suppression implants are as lethal as they are cutting-edge.

Most permanently blocked psions succumb to depression but Adams' thirst for vengeance appears to be fueling him. He murdered the subordinate who testified against him, then fled Australia one step ahead of capture. His last known location was Seattle, where he is believed to have been recruited by the CSA, an issue that may have long-term implications for the order's security.

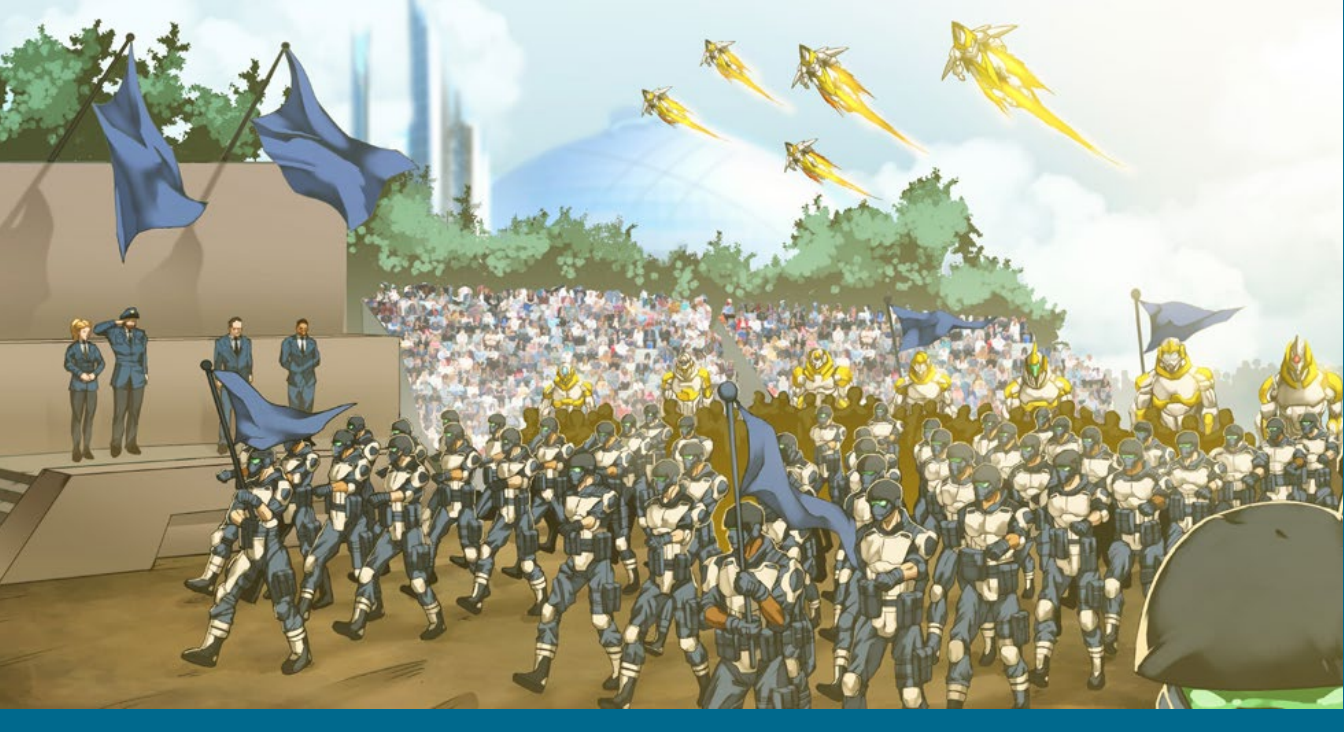
# MORE ON RUNNING LEGIONS CAMPAIGNS

Seven Legions, 100,000 Legionnaires, and a literal troubleshooting mission that spans human space. Beyond the order's military identity, the Storyguide has broad license to develop a Legions campaign. Military fiction typically places most or all of its protagonists within the same unit to provide unity of purpose, a support structure convenient to the plot, and a cast of interesting and useful extras. This is a logical starting point. Whatever the unit's assignment, that's the plot to which the characters will be central (or at least that's the springboard to launch them into the *real* plot).

The question then becomes *what kind of unit?* To answer this, look to the Legion to which the unit is subordinate. This also may determine a likely geographic focus.

### FIRST LEGION

The Home Guard is a well-balanced force charged with defending Australian and ARDEP member territory. It can deploy units anywhere in human space to back up the other Legions, but most of its planning, training, and operations



focus on eliminating Aberrant threats to the order's host nations.

"Territory" in the 22nd century includes airspace to the Kármán line and habitats and colonies beyond that. Thus, First Legion has operational control over a small space naval contingent semi-permanently detached from Seventh. Its greater naval component is the Legions' largest wet fleet, homeported in Brisbane and Perth, which protects Australia's territorial waters and merchant fleet.

As the founding Legion and the one most strongly associated with Legions HQ, First also collects many specialized functions that need central control but don't fit well under Third's support role. The JAG Corps, Internal Investigations, and Military Police Corps are, respectively, the order's legal department, counterintelligence and professional standards group, and law enforcement arm. These groups share responsibility for criminal processes involving Legionnaires, whether they've violated the UNCMJ or local laws, and their duties may take them anywhere Legionnaires go (or flee). MPs also provide security for the order's military liaison offices in allied nations and at UN headquarters.

The Legion Intelligence Corps also reports to First. LIC task forces may operate anywhere threat intelligence is available, supporting Legion or RTF commanders with fresh information and dirty tricks. While LIC has its own limited capability for direct action, it borrows strike companies from Fourth Legion for greater firepower.

## SECOND LEGION

Fortune's Knights are the General's rapid intervention tool. Regimental Task Force 2 is the Legion's only permanently established RTF, a command staff controlling a rotating roster of battalions ready to deploy anywhere on Earth in 12 hours. Typically, a unit spends three months of each year "cocked and locked" on RTF duty, with the remainder spent training, fulfilling less-urgent UN missions, or plugging holes when the other Legions need backup. Randomly scheduled drills test RTF units' deployment readiness, and woe betide a Knight who misses a recall order.

Second Legion also works alongside Third for disaster relief anywhere on the globe. Using the same superb transportation capabilities that enable RTF deployment, Second can drop a relief task force in to start search and rescue, medical aid, and other immediate tasks while preparing the ground for Third's heavier response. The 11th Infantry (Airborne) and 3rd Combat Engineer (Airborne) Battalions are this mission's dedicated first-in units.

Second Legion is headquartered in Sydney for access to the city's spaceport. It also has permanent bases in Hong Kong, Kathmandu, Beirut, Algiers, Windhoek, and Vladivostok, providing first response capability in areas without a geographically focused Legion.

## THIRD LEGION

A Support Command campaign will be an atypical military campaign because of Third Legion's ostensibly noncombat role. However, there's ample opportunity for Treys to tie in with combat units, either as part of a deployed battalion's support company or as attachments to lower-echelon units (see *Hanging With the Grunts*, p. 83). Third Legion operates every major terrestrial base, providing facility and support services for tenant units. Thus, Treys might go anywhere on Earth and to most other settled worlds.

While combat troops treat most Treys with mild disdain, they become *extremely* attached to those who share their dangers — especially their medics. They also respect combat veterans who transfer to Third to avoid medical retirement. Anyone else is still a Legionnaire, but a second-class one until they've fought alongside the "real" troops. Some Treys get themselves killed seeking opportunities to earn this respect; others find it thrust upon them in a firefight inside the wire at 0330 hours.

Third has several major components that make better background elements than campaign foci. The Medical Corps has most of the order's vitakinetics and furnishes all combat medics, who must double-dip in both medical and infantry AST. Training and Education Command runs LBT, AST, and LOBC, and brokers outside training for specialties too small or esoteric for the order to cost-effectively run its own schools. The Military Research Institute oversees weapons and technology development, coordinates psionic research, and operates the PK Prometheus Chamber. The Engineering Corps has a secondary mission of disaster relief, moving into stricken areas to shore up infrastructure after Second Legion puts boots on the ground. Engineering units work closely with their Æsculapian counterparts.

Third's last component of interest is the Chaplain Corps. Legions chaplains are ordained theologians who earn UN commissions through LOBC, though Legionnaires typically address them as "Padre" regardless of rank, denomination, or gender. They're responsible for troops' spiritual wellbeing and share mental health duties with the Medical Corps, which has been trying (unsuccessfully) to absorb them since their founding. Regulations allow a chaplain to go armed or unarmed as her conscience dictates — Aberrants rarely recognize noncombatants — and her enlisted attendants are also her bodyguards. Unusually, almost two-thirds of Legions chaplains are psions.

## FOURTH LEGION

The *Vigiles Mundi* are the order's heavy component, with the greatest proportions of tanks, VARGs, and artillery of any Legion. Contrary to stereotype, they're no less capable of subtlety and strategy than any other Legionnaires, but the job of Fourth's line units is to stand in the fire where lighter-equipped forces would melt. Every part of Fourth is tuned to support the *Vigiles*' primary mission of neutralizing the heaviest enemy forces — whether Aberrant, alien, or human.

A Fourth Legion line unit campaign will focus on combat. This Legion exists to get bloody and break shit, and General Larssen and Brigadier Rostami will send it where it can do that. Every Legion fights Aberrants; Fourth hunts them down and kicks in their doors.

Strike Command, housed under Fourth, is the Legions' special operations component. Its independent strike companies train for long-range reconnaissance, counterterrorism, hostage recovery, combat search and rescue, sabotage, and the rest of the commando's portfolio. Each company is adept at Strike Command's core tasks but has its own focus area, such as 1st Strike's desert warfare emphasis or 13th Strike's recently certified EHALO ability to airdrop from orbit.

Fourth Legion HQ is Joint Base Woomera, a facility shared with the ADF. Other major bases include Hong Kong, N'Djamena, Kabul, Kaliningrad, and Caracas.

## FIFTH LEGION

Rarely will a Fifth Legion campaign avoid intrigue. Whether it's friction with the FSA or social upheaval in Sudamérica, the Thunderbolts are inextricably tied to the Americas' internal and international politics. This Legion is still a military force but, of all the order, its actions may have the greatest repercussions in spheres outside the martial.

Like First, Fifth is a mid-weight force, with a balanced mix of infantry, aviation, and heavy assets. Because of the breadth of its geographic assignment, it operates in virtually every biome on the planet. Most of Fifth's component units carry mountain, jungle, arctic, marine, or desert warfare qualifications. The need for mobility over wide areas also means Fifth has a relatively large number of air cavalry and airborne battalions.

Soldiering in the FSA is wildly different from being based in Sudamérica. Brigadier Salera tries to rotate his units between the continents to avoid burnout or

## REMEMBERED IN THE HALLS

The Chaplain Corps is essential to Legions troop welfare and mission readiness. Since its inception, the psi order has suffered approximately 10,000 psion and 15,000 neutral casualties. Enemies deliberately target psions if they can identify them, psions' abilities often place them in positions of greater peril, and psion troops take excessive risks compared to neutrals, all of which drive a disproportionately high psion casualty rate. For reasons not yet understood, Legions PKs also suffer a higher psychological casualty rate than neutral troops or non-PK psions.

Not every casualty is a fatality, but enough are that any Legionnaire who's served for more than a year has a list of dead comrades. From a military perspective, the Chaplain Corps' most critical duty is to help the survivors stay in the fight.

complacency — and to prevent troops from growing too cozy with political factions in either hemisphere. In practice, this means Fifth Legion troops redeploy every 18 months and rarely feel like they have a home.

Fifth's best-kept secret is that it also works throughout Central America and the Caribbean, including the latter's Oceanian members. This is the Legion's easiest duty, so rotations here go to units that need stand-down time, but even these posts have their own politics and peril. Fifth Legion has the order's second-largest naval component because of ongoing aquatic Aberrant threats throughout the region.

## SIXTH LEGION

Since *Esperanza*, the Shieldbearers have validated the Legions' emphasis on low-level leadership training. Sixth Legion embodies the Three-Block War theory: a single military force simultaneously conducting full-scale warfare, peacekeeping, and humanitarian aid, with all three missions sometimes occurring in a limited geographic area.

Shieldbearers like to say they're in a war while the rest of the Legions occasionally visit wars. This is both unfair and inaccurate, but Sixth is tied with Seventh for the highest operational tempo, and with Fourth for the highest casualty rate. A Sixth Legion campaign looks a lot like every other major war in Europe's history: mud, fatigue, devastation, enemies on every rooftop, and civilians caught in the middle. Rotating back to HQ at Copenhagen or one of the other major bases in undestroyed cities can be a jarring contrast from the front lines of the Shatter or *la Blessure*.

In addition to its core European AOR, Sixth teams with Second to cover the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East. This gives Sixth the order's closest relationship with the UAN. Duty here is less intense but still involves grueling Aberrant patrols in the deserts and peacekeeping along some of the world's longest-contested borders.

## SEVENTH LEGION

The smallest Legion by headcount is also the most expensive. Phoenix Fleet consumes a noticeable percentage of the total UNMC budget. Vac naval capability isn't cheap, even before fighting wars in space. Damaged equipment may be salvageable in a planetary environment; out in the black, it's gone without a timely teleporter-and-clairsentient salvage op, which are rare at best. Hits that would yield minor injuries in atmosphere can lethally decompress an AVES. Every legionnaire lost is hard to replace. Before certifying to deploy on space duty, Firebirds must complete an additional eight months of training on spacecraft damage control, vacuum and exoplanet survival, null-G operations, and basic systems maintenance and repair. Washouts get recycled back to the terrestrial Legions.

All of this is a long way to say that even for Legionnaires, Firebirds have egos — but not unearned. Their wars happen far from home, in the galaxy's most unforgiving environments, with no hope of rescue or reinforcements beyond what they brought with them.

As humanity expands across the stars, Seventh is alongside them. New units and ships come online every month. Promotion opportunities and independent detached duty are everywhere. It's good work for the ambitious Legionnaire if she can survive it.

Seventh controls all the order's spacegoing assets, even those which are semi-permanently attached to other Legions to support their operations. Fleet Command owns all "rated" spaceships: those classed as corvettes or larger and bearing official names under UN commission. Aerospace Command is responsible for shuttles, fighters, and other small craft. Troop Command encompasses the marine infantry, cavalry, and other ground combat forces. The recently formed Yard Command gives Seventh a spacegoing maintenance and support component

independent of Third Legion, which has struggled to meet Seventh's unique requirements.

## HANGING WITH THE GRUNTS

At platoon and higher levels, the Legions attach specialists as the mission requires. The most common in infantry units are a medic and a drone operator/electronic warfare tech, both inserted into a platoon's command element. Technical, cultural, linguistic, and intelligence specialists are also common attachments.

This can be a narrative device to plug non-Legion characters into a Legion story arc or campaign. Going dangerous places to do the sort of dangerous things characters usually do may require a military escort. The Storyguide can attach the characters to a platoon or company, then keep the spotlight on them while the greater part of the unit handles most of the threat environment offscreen. This frees the characters to do the things (or get into the fights) important to the plot. Ellen Ripley, Carter Burke, and Bishop in *Aliens* are military science fiction's archetypal example of such an arrangement (including what happens when it goes wrong).

For a longer campaign, non-Legion characters (especially psions) may be attached to the Legions under mutual assistance compacts with other psi orders. Usually, this places such assets at a battalion or RTF commander's disposal, to be kept close as advisors or sent into the field as the mission requires. Being outside the Legion gives characters some flexibility in how they interpret their instructions and interact with Legionnaires, but this same detachment from the chain of command means they can't issue legal orders to the troops.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS > RECRUITING > PSIONS

Q: What if Psychokinesis isn't my Aptitude?

A: The Legions try to accommodate each recruit's interests and talents.* Your psi Aptitude will be only one of many factors determining your Legions Occupation Code and duty assignment. Over 6,000 non-Psychokinetic psions serve proudly in both combat and support units.

While psions don't receive preferential treatment — all Legionnaires are soldiers first — the Legions strive to make best use of your rare talents. You can expect an assignment that synergizes with your Aptitude, though perhaps not in the most obvious way. While every Aptitude enhances the archetypal Legions infantry squad, many other careers are available. Below are just a few of the LOCs that align well with each Aptitude.

Biokinesis: Counterintelligence Agent (G44); Debriefer-Interrogator (G32); Close Combat Instructor (T11).

Clairsentience: Cryptologist (G13); Military Police (R01); Operations Analyst-Planner (A93).

Electrokinesis: Electromagnetic Warfare Operator (D25); Transatmospheric Fighter Pilot (H51); Biotech Systems Artificer (W75).

Telepathy: Linguist (G12); Extraterrestrial Liaison-Contact Advisor (U91); Tactical Communicator (D01).

Teleportation: Secure Signals Courier (D38); Transportation Rigger (E03); Cavalry Scout (A40).

Vitakinesis: Chemical-Biological-Nuclear-Special Weapons Defense Technician (M62); Combat Medical Attendant (J01); Assault Engineer (F11).

* All applications subject to review by Legions Recruiting Command. Due to military exigencies, LRC cannot guarantee personal preference in LOC or duty station.

Despite their different theaters and focuses, the troops of each Legion are unsurprisingly similar. After all, every legionnaire undertakes LBT. The Legions Society Path (**Trinity Continuum: *Æon***, p. 149) works for an infantry soldier of any Legion, while the Paths here provide other specializations for characters to pursue.

## CEREMONIAL SOLDIER PATH (ROLE)

Chrome and gold braid replace gunmetal and camouflage. The character may be as lethal as any other member of her military, but she represents that force to the public or to the diplomats and politicians who ultimately decide when and why she'll fight. She's paid to look good, be polite (or silent), and maintain constant vigilance in case the literal and figurative gloves need to come off. This Path may represent duty on a drill team, service as an embassy guard, or ritual enforcement of centuries-old traditions and protocols.

**Example Connections:** Ambassadorial Staff, Exclusive Tailors, Command and General Staff

**Skills:** Close Combat, Command, Integrity, Persuasion

**Edges:** Always Prepared, Danger Sense, Fame (• to ••), Fast Draw, Iron Will, Skilled Liar, Small Unit Tactics, Striking.

## MILITARY INVESTIGATOR PATH (ROLE)

The character serves in uniform but his duties have much in common with civilian law enforcement. He investigates crimes involving his military, whether committed by or against its members. The people he hunts have better training and armament than ordinary criminals... but so do he and his backup.

**Example Connections:** Your Military's JAG Corps, Arms Dealers, Mercenary Brokers

**Skills:** Aim, Command, Culture, Enigmas

**Edges:** Always Prepared, Analyst (**Mission Statements**), Covert, Deductive Reasoning (**Terra Firma**, p. 167), Library, The Right Market (**Terra Firma**, p. 167), Safe House, any one Style Edge.

## WARRIOR-TECHNICIAN PATH (ROLE)

In a fight, the character depends on her equipment for her life. She trusts her own hands before anyone else's, so she's learned to maintain, repair, and even improve her weapons, armor, or vehicle. She knows when something's wrong or out of place before the first warning light illuminates. Depending on the force in which she serves, her superiors may view her interest as a welcome supplement to thinly stretched mechanics or an irritating distraction from her combatant duties.

**Example Connections:** Manufacturer's Tech-Reps, Maintenance Crews, Fellow Pilots

**Skills:** Aim, Enigmas, Pilot, Technology

**Edges:** Armor Expert, Hardy, Increased Tolerance, Library (usually technical), Lightning Calculator, Ms. Fix It, Weak Spots.

## THE EVOCATI PATH (SOCIETY)

Not all Legionnaires are in for life. Playing on the psi order's name and historical antecedents, the Evocati Order is a social organization of former Legionnaires who remain on good terms with the order. Most are financially independent — sadly, often through disability compensation. To Legionnaires far from home, the local *evocatus* is often a friendly source of shelter, mentorship, or free beer and barbecue. Some *evocati* find themselves back on the fringes of Legion operations. Others are driven to play the reluctant hero, righting wrongs without benefit of official sanction.

**Path Concepts**

Bar owner with a colorful past, charter fishing boat captain and occasional smuggler, disabled OpNet information broker, military history professor who knows of what he speaks

**Example Connections:** Freelance Psion, Strike Command Special Operator, Military Chaplain, High-Ranking Former Protege

**Skills:** Aim, Close Combat, Command, Integrity

**Edges:** Blue Box, Danger Sense, Dual Citizenship, Safe House, Small Unit Tactics, Wealth (• to •••), any one Style Edge.

## WHERE'S THE LEGIONS RANK EDGE?

Rank's advantages in most campaigns should be narrative rather than mechanical. In any point-based character creation system, sacrificing points for higher rank makes a character less competent in other areas, the opposite of how military promotion should work (especially in the Legions). High rank, especially on the commissioned side, also binds the recipient with duty assignments that prevent the sort of freedom most characters need for interesting stories.

We recommend each group assign character rank based on the story's needs. Lieutenants and captains are junior enough to command small, independent units on detached duty, particularly if they have experienced NCO advisors. A sergeant or staff sergeant may lead a small detail directly supporting another order or an Æon mission. Solo Legionnaires tasked with the same thing are likely to be seasoned enough to operate without direct supervision from their usual chains of command; they're typically mid- or high-ranking NCOs.

## SPECIAL EDGE: BLUE BOX (• TO •••)

**Prerequisite:** The Evocati

Your character maintains secret caches of military-grade equipment identical to what he used in the Legions. Once per chronicle, he can access a cache which contains a basic set of Legions infantry kit. For each dot after the first in this Edge, select one additional cache feature:

- Caches contain one infantry gear set per player character
- Character can access caches twice per chronicle
- Caches contain additional equipment appropriate to one LOC (e.g., battlefield surgical gear, surveillance drone, demolition charges, null-signature cloak suit)

Most nations frown on private ownership of this sort of hardware. If your character gets caught doing illegal things with illegal equipment, he's on his own. The Evocati Order will retroactively yank his membership. The Legions *certainly* didn't let him establish caches in case they needed to equip their veterans to resist an alien invasion or similar global catastrophe...

CHAPTER FIVE

# THE MINISTRY OF NOETIC AFFAIRS

"The human mind will not be confined to any limits."
— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

In a roster of heroes, the Ministry of Noetic Affairs strikes a stark contrast to the other psi orders. Its reputation looms large as a frightening, even oppressive force — a reputation it wields with adroit skill to achieve its goals. Yet far from being the grim-faced, regimented conspiracy of mental tyrants as some imagine it, the Ministry is an ambitious new kind of community — a vanguard in human evolution stripped of the barriers between self and fellow, but still respectful of the individual psyche within that wider tapestry. The Ministry knows someone must do the hard work of safeguarding minds and societies from chaos — that some secrets must be dragged into the light, but others left in comforting darkness. Better to guide humanity towards a better future through subtle influence, covert guidance, and even, yes, fear, rather than fail to push human potential forward.

Unlocking humanity's psionic potential resonated profoundly with Proxy Bue Li's Christian faith. Proxy Zweidler suggested the suitability of the Prometheus mythology at the awakening of the proxies, and soon more of humanity. Bue Li saw parallels with the role of the Holy Spirit as the essence of humanity's life and soul's intrinsic connection to God. Bue Li feels the presence of the Divine in the unity gifted humanity through psionics, particularly telepathy. The ecstasy of her revelation soon spread through the rest of her growing psi order. While none within the order are required to take on the proxy's faith, the total openness in the Ministry's culture means few completely resist the feeling of something greater watching over humanity and caring for its destiny.

## UNITY

The central offices of the Ministry in Beijing are strikingly quiet. They have all the hustle and bustle of other government hubs, but little of the vocalization. Psions pause between desks in momentary, hurried mental communion. Vital meetings hang unseen in the air as agents fiercely argue, the only visible mark of raging debate a flitting look of triumph or frustration. Even neutral civil servants are part of the mental tapestry through the near-ubiquitous use of mind-sharing bioapps within the Ministry's halls. Despite the silence, the community of the Ministry of Noetic Affairs is paradoxically open and honest, an ever-shifting weave of connected minds through which the order's business ebbs and flows.

Rather than rigorously enforced hierarchy and bureaucracy, Rebecca Bue Li chose to inculcate the Ministry in its earliest days with an open culture where desired behavior stemmed from respect and honesty. The psi order embraces the sharing of minds, openness of emotions, and a strong egalitarian streak. Within the Ministry, psions simply can't get away with the usual human approach of polite, and often oppressive, fictions to keep people in line and the Ministry has sought to banish the need for such fictions completely. Discontent or disagreement is expressed openly through mind-share networks at all levels.

The order's regulations condemn the internal suppression of dissidence, forcing those in authority to face and consider differing opinions rather than stamping down on them. The Ministry's culture exalts the clarity granted by a clear perspective for how a comrade really feels, and its philosophical factions do not hide themselves. Decision-making occurs via cascades of interlinked mind-share networks flaring up, as those at the heart of a situation reach out to others for expertise or advice. Each possibility runs through a gauntlet of dozens or even hundreds of critical minds, fed back to the original group with suggestions and critique in mere moments. Agents prize the opinions of rivals and opponents for being incisive and realistic.

Such open community spirit clashes with the necessities of espionage and security. The Ministry handles secrets and sensitive information which cannot always be freely distributed even within its own ranks. Some of this is handled via telepathic imprint technology (p. 186) which can encrypt mental information, but even this is vulnerable once an intended recipient understands the message. Mental shielding

## RE-EDUCATION CAMPS AND WORSE

Like many great powers, China has sometimes used the horrors of "re-education camps" and other such tools to suppress minorities and force dissidents in line. After the Aberrant crisis, the Bodhisattva's legislations saw a withering away of most such grim measures, but an oppressive foundation remained for minority cultures who remained resistant to the nova's elaborate social conditioning, and dissidents who flourished in the new cracks of society.

During the earliest days of the Ministry, proxy Bue Li had to make unpleasant concessions to powerful peers in government, particularly in allowing them to use her telepaths as part of such brutally oppressive systems. She soon realized her mistake. Faced with the immediacy of their participation in such absolute expressions of human subjugation, the experience didn't just scar the telepaths — it killed them. Suicide rates skyrocketed among Ministry officers assigned to camps, unable to lie to themselves about what they were doing. The wider Ministry nearly rebelled in response.

The proxy's response was swift, burning through much of the precious political capital she had gleaned to win over certain key allies. The Ministry led a brutal purge of governmental administrations overseeing the camps, disbanding the vast majority and giving the Chinese political class their first genuine demonstration of just how powerful this new psi order truly was.

via Psychbending offers further protection from prying minds. Ultimately, however, the Ministry faces the stark truth that anything a telepath *wants* to pluck from a peer's mind, they probably *can*. Rather than bury its head in the sand, the Ministry deals with such a frightening reality by building its culture around acceptance. The order encourages honesty; a psion contemplating sensitive information is expected to make that clear to peers who share thoughts with her, and the heavy pressure of expectation is on those peers to restrain themselves from digging deeper — especially since breaches of conduct will be easily detectable by telepaths looking at *their* thoughts in turn.

# ASSETS AND AGENTS

The Ministry of Noetic Affairs sits atop a bureaucratic superstructure of departments staffed by neutral civil servants. This edifice handles much of the Ministry's daily work, a leviathan of reports and resource management facilitating the three divisions' efforts. These departments follow the same organizational chart and career tracks as other Chinese governmental ministries.

The psi order itself serves as the Ministry's head and follows its own practices. Organization is relatively flat, with little distinction in ranks among full-fledged psions. Managerial and oversight positions stem from experience, expertise, and talent in an Aptitude, and are often temporary or rotated. The triumvirates, the three leaders of each division, are elected by their peers and serve six-month terms, although a panel member may be re-elected several times sequentially. Once their service is done, a manager or triumvirate member returns to the regular ranks and is nothing more than another comrade among equals.

Teams and departments work through literal meetings of minds, forging networks of shared thoughts and reaching consensus on decisions. Where consensus is not possible or the situation dictates a rapid response, teams accept a quorum decision but maintain and present dissenting opinions, especially where the outcome is passed on to another team for further action. Daisy-chaining mental networks is standard practice, shunting the mental workload out so each team can bring specific expertise and feed their findings back to the central network. Telepathy renders this process swiftly, and Noetics Institutes research has developed mental short-hand and information packaging techniques to make it even faster.

By necessity, the Ministry maintains liaison officer roles plugging into wider government to handle the administrative responsibilities it has toward its fellow bodies of state. For example, there are two actual Ministers of Noetic Affairs with the authority to attend the highest governmental meetings, regularly rotating roles the panel leaders invest with the power to make on-the-spot decisions of the greatest import. Even here, these outward-facing roles usually perform their duties while mind-sharing with advisors. Almost every word a Minister of Noetic Affairs has ever said to the standing committee at the head of China's government has been carefully considered by a team of experts responding in real-time through shared perception.

All Ministry officers possess military rank equivalent to at least a shao xiao field officer (a major), with triumvirates approving higher rank for operatives as needed. While the Chinese government grants Ministry agents the authority to carry and use light firearms, the Ministry itself does *not* simply dole out authorization to kill and will closely investigate deaths occurring in the line of duty. Combat specialist psions receive extensive training above and beyond their peers, with commensurate access to heavier armaments.

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The Ministry tackles volatile situations on an everyday basis. Teams maintain daily surveillance on key figures within and without China, watching for impending threats or exploitable weaknesses. Investigators root out Aberrant cultists and criminals, and telepaths pick their way through complex negotiations with aliens even as they scrutinize the same for evidence of sinister intentions. Covert agents pluck forth the secrets of earthly governments, while the looming threat of the Aberrants' return from space hangs over the Ministry like the sword of Damocles. The order doesn't have the luxury to spend its time on exploring, or inventing commercial goods, or picking and choosing its good causes. It needs its thousands of psions to be constantly *working*, often in high pressure or dangerous contexts that can rapidly escalate.

When shit does hit the fan, the order creates task forces to tackle these emergent crises. An agent takes on the role of manager with oversight of a project and pulls in specialists from across the divisions as needed. A crisis task force still practices consensus-based decision pooling if viable, but the relevant triumvirate invests the manager with the power to issue commanding directives if necessary. Triumvirate members also make themselves available to the manager for consultation; any agent in the field is thus only two steps away from the very top of the chain of responsibility. These flexible response protocols have significantly influenced the Æon Trinity's own crisis management best practices, and the sheer efficiency of Ministry techniques remains the envy of Trinity operatives.

## Support and Supplementary Staff

Ministry operatives can theoretically draw on the enormous resources of the Chinese government, but the order prefers to rely on its own (admittedly still vast) assets. The labyrinthine bureaucracy of baselines beneath the order handles the full spectrum of basics such as transport, housing, tools, and intel. Relying on other ministries or local government weakens the mystique of the order and leaves it in their debt. Better an agent turns up in ominous, sleek Ministry vehicles as a clear reminder of the order's power — or, indeed, not be noticed turning up at all.

The Ministry's motor pool is enormous and covers everything from unmarked civilian vehicles to armored aircraft. Order members can also access a wide swathe of advanced psionic technology — particularly telepathy-related — stemming from the hard work of the Noetics Institutes. By comparison, its weapons lockers are extremely limited. The Ministry expects its agents to solve problems with subtlety, not collateral damage.

As well as providing material assistance, the Ministry goes to great lengths to offer psychological support to its membership. Even a telepath can struggle with the troubles of her own mind, and the intense stress of a covert assignment or facing down an existential threat takes a heavy toll. The order prioritizes extensive debriefing in the aftermath of crisis situations and deep cover missions and provides the finest counseling available.

Order agents can also call upon specialist neutrals when the circumstances demand. The Ministry has allied scientists and academics across Chinese universities and companies, and it maintains security teams with the training and heavy weaponry needed for explosive situations. Most notable are the members of the Special Noetic Assistance Project, erroneously known as the "Eyes of Heaven" after a journalist overheard one operative disparagingly refer to her distant telepathic rider. The Project uses bodyjack systems (p. 185) and specialist mental training to create enhanced in-field coordination between telepathic oversight and highly trained crisis experts; it protects valuable telepaths from direct danger, and serves as an effective force multiplier for undercover situations preventing the physical involvement of additional agents.

## The Offices of Digital Security and Threat Forecasting

The order treats most psions of Aptitudes other than Telepathy much the same as their peers, albeit with heavy encouragement to pursue telepathic Auxiliary Modes. The Ministry has several organizations that tend to attract specific Aptitudes.

The innocuously named Office of Digital Security handles both the protection of the order's own information technology and intrusion into others' as part of intelligence operations. More than just another espionage program or administrative department, the Office is a driving force within the Ministry, overseeing sensitive data analysis and monitoring the wider order's access to restricted information on governmental servers. The combination of telepaths and electrokinetics renders the Office terrifyingly capable of rooting out secrets. Those who believe the Ministry merely seeks to read their minds overlook that the Office of Digital Security has already read their messages and any communications addressed to them before they do — with or without the wider government's authorization.

The Office of Threat Forecasting began as an entirely conventional bureau using existing analysis and forecasting techniques but is adapting to the numerous Ministry clairsentients who have flocked to its ranks. The Office looks at the bigger picture emerging from the enormous swathes of intelligence the order gathers and processes every day, building an incredible understanding of worldwide covert affairs. Threat Forecasting tries to pinpoint what will happen *next*, ideally placing Ministry agents in a position to neutralize threats before they ever truly manifest.

## THE OFFICE OF ALIEN AFFAIRS

The Ministry supplies a significant number of agents to serve as envoys, translators, and facilitations for humanity's dealings with aliens. Alien Affairs is a prestigious assignment, especially given the good PR the Office has with the wider world, but it's also high risk and demands intensive additional training to handle the complex nature of alien psyches. Furthermore, Alien Affairs covertly investigates alien cultures for threats or information they may be concealing, and it's one of the few areas where the Ministry holds no reservations about sharing vital intelligence with organizations like the United Nations. Any alien culture poses a potentially existential threat to the human species, and Alien Affairs agents know full well how high the stakes are.

Alien Affairs enjoys unusual levels of co-operation with the other psi orders, and 'lends' agents out regularly to participate in Leviathan crews, Æon Trinity crisis teams dealing with alien threats, and UN military operations combating the Chromatics. The Office has taken point on efforts to identify whether unknown hostiles are Aberrant or alien and assists xenoarchaeologists investigating the ruins of dead species like those on Bullseye. It's one of the Ministry's most potent sources of legitimate influence in the wider world, and the order milks it for all it's worth.

# SPINNING THE SPIDER'S WEB

While the Ministry of Noetic Affairs maintains innumerable surveillance and espionage operations, the **Critical Juncture Program** consists of its highest-priority covert postings across the globe. Critical Juncture operatives are deep-cover telepaths positioned close to influential political figures in long-term postings, applying subtle steering touches to their target's mind. Operatives are physically isolated from the order community for extensive periods, must practice incredible finesse with their Aptitude, and are at great risk should their cover be compromised. Only the best and most mentally resilient are chosen for Critical Juncture postings, and most only choose to serve once; repeat candidates require extensive screening, therapy, and surgical and genetic work to change their appearance for future operations. It's the bleeding edge of spycraft, directly influencing world politics.

At the Noetics Institutes, several teams of researchers continue to refine **Artificial Mental Imaging**, a breakthrough biotech project creating organic simulacra of the human brain for telepathy training purposes. Trainee telepaths need human minds to practice on — but some telepathic techniques are dangerous, and a novice is particularly at risk of putting a mental foot wrong and causing real psychological damage. AMI brains are culture-grown neural matrices sufficiently alive for telepathy but designed to have a malleable foundation of a psyche rather than a true mind. Psyche-engineer telepaths rewrite these mental landscapes to their needs, forging the personality they wish a trainee to interact with — building a portfolio of memories, or hiding crucial information underneath fabricated emotional drives. A trainee can then play havoc with the contents, exploring the limits of their power without fear of causing permanent psychological trauma on a real human being. Artificial Mental Imaging has produced several significant off-shoot technologies, and psyche-engineering remains a popular assignment for Noetics Institutes telepaths.

AMI research has also led to the creation of the **Shadow Puppet Theater**, a considerably more sinister application of the technology. A highly restricted secret even within the Ministry, the Theater is attempting to lab grow humans with AMI brains — blank slates onto which a telepath might create whole personalities from scratch, including any number of conditional triggers. Via tissue samples stolen from Chinese hospitals, the Theater has grown blank-brain clones of several politicians and public figures for potential replacement operations. Currently the project has stalled around fundamental connection flaws between AMI brains and an actual human nervous system, but is operating off-the-books espionage against the Æsculapian Order in the hope of finding a solution within their extensive archives of medical knowledge.

If the workings of a single human mind can be so fragile, how does one go about breaking the conditioning of an entire *nation?* The **Shoreline Project** seeks to find out, aimed like a dagger at

the Bodhisattva's legislations. While many Chinese politicians know the Ministry is uneasy about the Aberrant laws, few guess the depths of the order's animosity. The Ministry does not fully comprehend how the Aberrant's laws produce their outcomes, nor can it effectively predict those outcomes. Worse, the Bodhisattva did not predict the rise of psions, and so the laws never had a place for the Ministry; they actively push back against anything but the order's subtlest efforts. Now, that nova-forged framework begins to crumble in the face of change. Shoreline is still in its early stages, analyzing how the laws sometimes produce flawed results and how modern dissident movements can flourish despite them. Ministry oversight of policing anti-Bodhisattva sentiment handily conceals its interest, although other intelligence agencies within China are increasingly aware that *someone* is prodding at the cracks in society. For their part, project agents have now identified the activity of several Aberrant infiltrators who seem to have a deep understanding of how to exploit the Bodhisattva's social calculations. The project is also conducting carefully staged social disorder instances in controlled sub-regions, observing and learning how to disrupt key elements of the nova legislation and resultant social conditioning.

Shoreline began as part of another project, the **Cognitive Hazard Containment Protocol**. Cognitive Hazard itself remains active, identifying anomalous and dangerous threats to the human psyche and doing its best to contain or destroy them. Cognitive Hazard operatives have tackled language-destroying Aberrants, corrosive memetic messages on the OpNet distributing very real Quantum corruption, ancient relics that exert strange mental influence over those in their vicinity, renegade psychohistorians, and phenomena on alien planets that hollowed out colonists' minds and rode them like puppets. It's the 'weird shit' bureau of the Ministry, the psions that no-one *wants* to have to call up because it means things have gotten out of control. The location of its containment black sites are among the most highly restricted secrets the order possesses.

Another offshoot of Cognitive Hazard is the **Fundamental Communication Project**, which attempts to explore and apply a key discovery of telepathy. Mind-to-mind access can go past established lexicons to reach a pure form of communication that has no regard for language, implying a deeper, overriding framework of absolute *understanding* upon which all human languages rest. If the Project's lead researchers are right, it might be possible to unpick the raw substrate of semiotics and intent to discover the communication triggers upon which language sits, allowing for the creation of a universal spoken language. It might even be possible to weaponize that, to discover the same levers the more controlling forms of telepathy rely on — uttered or written commands that compel action, bypassing the conscious mind entirely. Fundamental Communication teams work on a worldwide scale. An enormous amount of study takes place in its Guangzhou laboratories, processing and testing innumerable mental scans and lexicons, but Noetics Institutes and Semiotics Officers also perform linguistic research directly in foreign communities, and scour archives for information on dead and early language forms that might offer further insight. Project members also ravenously devour every scrap of information relating to alien forms of communication.

Itself an offshoot from Fundamental Communication, the **Open Mind Initiative** is a small, idealistic project examining the internal culture of the Ministry itself. Rather than serving as internal police, though, Open Mind studies both how to further refine the order — identifying sources of friction in behaviors and expectations — and what lessons might be applied to baseline communities who lack psionic potential. Open Mind theorists run controlled tests of subtle memetics on civilian populations. They also play around with the rules and regulations for baseline civil servants in the wider Ministry of Noetic Affairs, to see whether emergent properties of the Ministry's culture could transfer to those who still need to rely on old-fashioned forms of interaction. Open Mind pushes for the expansion of mind-share shard use (see p. 188) beyond Ministry personnel, seeing it as a brute-force but effective solution to humanity's flaws.

The deeply esoteric **Echo Archive** delves into the idea of shared human consciousness, Akashic records, and other forms of out-of-body connection across humanity. Echo researchers believe such accounts may provide insight into a latent telepathic potential that *all* humans possess, perhaps accessible via dreams or focusing practices. If a communal subconscious does exist, the Ministry is desperate to access it and its secrets. The Echo Archive is building a hypothesis that aspects of clairsentience may itself tap into such a network. For most outside of the Archive, though, it's the equivalent of the old Cold War psychic programs — a naive diversion from the very real uses of telepathy they already have. Few

expect the more-psychic-than-psychics research to discover any real revelations. Still, the Archive has tangentially ended up central to Ministry pharmaceuticals research, due to its agents delving into the use of psychotropic drugs to open up the baseline human mind. Some of these lines of chemical inquiry have produced practical results like the rather grim Owl cocktail (p. 186).

## FRIENDLY MINDS

The Ministry of Noetic Affairs actively cultivates allies and strong relationships as a core part of its agenda. Despite lurid conspiracy theories on the OpNet about telepathic agents bending victims into unthinking vassals, the order's preferred approach to building alliances relies on time-proven and quite mundane methods. Ministry diplomats and intermediaries are picked for their exceptional ethical standards, and in truth telepathy is too blunt an instrument for the task. People know the Ministry possesses many telepaths and so tend to closely watch and question their thoughts and feelings, and those of their colleagues, when dealing with the order.

The **Chinese government** itself is seen as the order's greatest ally, of course, although not every Ministry psion would agree. At their best, the Ministry and the wider government work hand in hand with incredible efficiency, allowing the order to draw upon truly enormous pools of material and manpower from across Chinese-influenced territories. In return, the Ministry provides not just telepathic investigation of threats but rapid crisis response, diplomatic facilitation (particularly with aliens), and elite psion combatants capable of going toe-to-toe with inhuman and posthuman threats. Civil servants in the Chinese diplomatic corps actively court Ministry friendship, to the point where fraternization outside of work is so common there are several psion-and-diplomat-only social clubs in major centers of governance like Beijing. Ranking officers in the armed forces forge personal ties to Ministry agents in the crucible of battle against Aberrants and mutants, and Chinese high command greatly values the order as a counterbalance to the power the other psi orders grant their own host countries.

The **psi orders** (understandably) tend to treat the Ministry of Noetic Affairs with suspicion. The Ministry is an actual intelligence agency serving a national power that has threatened nuclear destruction in the past and now pursues a muscular program of international influence. At the same time, the Ministry *has* proven its worth alongside its peers in their joint ventures, backing up the others at critical junctures like the Chitra Bhanu purge — and sometimes leaning hard on the Chinese government to help other orders on its own turf. The latter proves surprising to many psions who assume the Ministry to be deeply territorial about China and the autonomous territories. The order does have a dim view of unauthorized operations within the region but is quite willing to sanction properly filed requests and will go out of its way to help its colleagues in such circumstances.

And, of course, everyone wants their own telepaths. The *Æon* Trinity facilitates psionic exchanges, but telepathy activation still requires the Ministry's co-operation and training expertise — particularly via the Artificial Mind Imaging program and its test dummy brains. In turn, the Ministry prizes electrokinetics for cybersecurity and data espionage, clairsentients for augmented surveillance and investigation, and of course the rare few teleporters. These exchanges help break down some mistrust.

The Ministry's closest mirror among its peers is the **Norça**. For all their differences, they're both heavily involved with politics and invested in covert and intelligence work. The resulting rivalry is tempered by a certain level of respect on the part of the Ministry, with recent triumvirate panels pushing for greater levels of co-ordination when it comes to international threats. They see it as better to strengthen relationships with the one order who best understands why the Ministry does what it does, and play to each other's strengths when the fate of humanity itself is on the line.

The Ministry remains somewhat standoffish towards the ***Æon* Trinity**, unwilling to entirely trust the organization with its secrets, but co-operation between the two is a regular necessity. The sanction of the Ministry gives *Æon* Trinity operations in China legitimacy, and carefully filtered excerpts from its intelligence network provide a level of security information that *Æon* would otherwise struggle to acquire. In return, the Ministry values *Æon*'s role in smoothing out relationships with the other psi orders

## THE AUTONOMOUS REGIONS

The Ministry of Noetic Affairs has sufficient power and influence in the 'Autonomous Regions' to put the lie to that term. It would also be hard to describe those nations as *allies* of the order. The ruling governments may enjoy access to the Ministry's power, but plenty of people on the street fear and resent the psionic agents as representatives of foreign rule. After all, part of the Ministry's *job* is quelling nationalist sentiment.

This is starting to change. Exposed to the simmering discontent in the populaces they monitor, growing numbers of Ministry psions are falling in line with those beliefs themselves. This pro-independence faction believe the end of the Autonomous Regions does not necessarily have to come alongside a waning of Ministry power. They're arguing for the establishment of allied national 'franchises' of the order, creating entirely new departments for each nation that answer to the government in question rather than to China.

and facilitating the cross-pollination of Aptitudes, as well as access to projects and operations in regions where Ministry influence is weak or potential partners would recoil from their sinister reputation. A strong alliance exists between the Office of Semiotics and the Medea Initiative. Ministry telepaths also work closely with both Project Cyclops and Medea Initiative agents on alien matters.

The Ministry of Noetic Affairs plays its part in any alliance between China and other world governments, providing protection and diplomatic assistance as needed, but takes the lead in one particular case — the **Existential Threat Counterintelligence Agreement**. ETCA was established to help co-ordinate monitoring of Aberrant activity below the scale of the United Nations' involvement, but it's more than just an intelligence-sharing agreement. The several dozen nations who have signed on to it — including countries in Europe, South America, the UAN, and the FSA itself — fund and maintain a containment facility for Aberrant captives. The Agreement provides the necessary legal cover to sidestep rights and citizenship issues relating to any Aberrants it processes, placing them into the hands of a Ministry interrogation team who can pluck intelligence directly from their minds. The containment facility, nicknamed Diyu among Ministry operatives, isn't a true prison. Aberrants are sedated or otherwise restrained while present, but after the telepath team have done their work, the posthumans are handed back to the providing state. Under ECTA, the resulting intelligence is shared among all signatories of the Agreement to help maintain strong cross-national awareness of current Aberrant threats.

Anyone and everyone could be a potential threat. That's the hard lesson the Ministry has had to learn, and the bitter counterbalance to its ideals of mental community and unity.

The **Chinese government** is perhaps the Ministry's greatest enemy. Petty bureaucratic turf wars and feuds with envious politicians take a steady toll on the order's everyday efforts, while an existential threat exists within the mundane security and intelligence apparatus of the state. The leadership on both sides perceives the other as rivals for control over a portfolio they believe themselves better placed to run. If the order loses this struggle, it doesn't just face a loss of influence. Its opponents think the telepathic bureau should be entirely under their control, not run as a virtual state-within-a-state under the auspices of an untrustworthy proxy. The heads of China's internal and external security agencies virtually salivate over the idea of dividing the Ministry between them and wielding telepaths as their personal attack dogs in the political struggles of the state. The **Ministry of State Security** takes any opportunity to detain and make trouble for Noetic Affairs psions, has 'disappeared' some in the past, and tries to subvert the allegiance of others.

At a more grounded level, the **Ministry of Public Security** presents Noetic Affairs psions with decentralized resistance every day. This is less the maneuvering of ambitious upper echelons, and more the grudging fear of lowly administrators and police who resent Ministry involvement in their affairs. Noetics Affairs agents have a bad habit of looking down on mundane detectives and officers, who in turn view the psions as arrogant elites out of touch with the realities of regular law enforcement. A psion can still expect co-operation from local authorities, but unless she puts the effort into building key relationships with trustworthy officers, she may find her requests carried out with frustrating literal-mindedness or surly passivity.

Among the Ministry's fellow psi orders, it still considers surviving **Chitra Bhanu** psions as hostile elements to be hunted down and detained. Rebecca Bue Li and her order proved key in uncovering evidence leading to the purge of the Chibs in the first place, and the Ministry still believes its involvement was justified. Since rogue Chitra Bhanu could present a terrorist threat and likely hold a grudge against the Ministry, a small team of operatives keeps watch for any new sightings or activity. After a decade, the order is confident that few, if any, Chibs remain within the Chinese sphere of influence.

The Ministry also deeply distrusts the **Upeo wa Macho**. While not actively hostile towards the order, Rebecca Bue Li's cadre feel the way the teleporters disappeared, leaving humanity stranded, displayed not only a selfish lack of commitment to the greater good, but also suggests the Ministry's suspicions about them were justified in the first place. Now, the Ministry is desperate to break the Upeo chokehold on the Teleportation Aptitude, and hungers for any teleporter psions it can acquire through cross-pollination between the orders. This is one area where the Ministry of Noetic Affairs and the wider Chinese government are in firm agreement — both want insurance against future cowardice or disloyalty on part of the Upeo.

The **United Nations Commission of Noetic Oversight**, established in the aftermath of the Chitra Bhanu purge, views the Ministry of Noetic Affairs as highly suspect. The two bodies overlap in their focus on noetic matters, and each view the others' actions as international meddling that risks breeding disaster. While the UNCNO currently does not have the executive teeth to cause the Ministry serious problems, the order knows full well that the United Nations' governing council tends to overreact based on fear. If faced with another Chitra Bhanu situation blowing up out of its control, the UN may well rush to endow the UNCNO with sweeping new powers to rein in the psi orders. So, it behooves the Ministry to tread carefully around bureaucratic investigators. As a result, despite being vastly more powerful, the Ministry of Noetic Affairs does what it can to hide its activities from the UNCNO; what the United Nations doesn't know, they can't get upset about. The Ministry is also taking more direct steps to reduce friction between the two bodies, trying to build ties with still-suspicious Noetic Commissioners. It lends telepathic psions to the UNCNO to help the latter with their investigations into *other* psi orders, gleaning the Ministry additional intel while earning thanks from overstretched Commissioners. The order also offers additional specialist training to the tiny number of UNCNO telepaths, alongside access to some of the less sensitive technologies coming out

of the Noetics Institutes. In short, the Ministry is trying to buy the friendship of the organization, defanging it by infiltrating and subverting it.

Almost every world power agrees **Aberrants** are a species-wide threat. The sheer population of China and its Autonomous Zones results in a meaningful number of Aberrants erupting within the Ministry's sphere of influence, but the Bodhisattva's legislations usually help reveal their destructive activities in short order. At least, that's what the Ministry *thought*.

The Shoreline Project has discovered a network of Aberrants who aren't just working around the social and legal framework to act within China — they're actively *exploiting* it, covertly using the interlocking cascades of actions and outcomes to achieve their goals with minimal effort. Like a spider at the center of a web, some pull together cults or orchestrate social chaos by merely plucking at a few strings. Others refrain from indulging any short-term destructive urges, making them extremely hard to track. The Ministry has come to realize that while some Aberrants have stumbled on these exploits independently, a significant number are working together. The order now finds itself fighting a shadow war in the cracks of Chinese society, dueling with a growing edifice of cults and surprisingly subtle Aberrant foes.

The Ministry has dealt with its fair share of **organized crime** within China. Most of the old syndicates are muzzled by the government, but a few dangerous new specimens rear their heads and threaten to spread chaos. The White Mirror Society (**Terra Firma**, p. 102) is one such problem. They are an apparently leaderless but definitely murderous organization bent on destroying the subservient triads and cartels who submitted to the new order. Another is the Broken Circle, who seem to have acquired hazardous memetic technologies, possibly nova-created in nature. They terrorize their targets via exposure to terrifying basilisk-hack displays through hacked minicomps and advertisement screens. Threat Forecasting has flagged the Broken Circle for priority attention from Cognitive Hazard agents.

To some extent, every foreign government is an antagonist for the Ministry. The order's covert assignments clash with intelligence agencies across the globe, both as aggressor and defender. Most of these rivalries involve a level of mutual respect; the Ministry and its peers are playing the same game, and while the outcomes can be lethal, everyone involved has an interest in limiting escalation and collateral damage. The Ministry has normalized off-the-record spy exchanges when things go awry, since every dead psion represents a huge loss of time and effort. In the last decade, though, the Ministry has encountered a new enemy with a less restrained agenda. The closest the order has to a name for this agency is a codename recovered from a damaged server by Office of Digital Security operatives — **Operation TIBICENA**. Drawing on ex-special forces and spies from several Sudamérican and UAN agencies, the Ministry's best guess is TIBICENA is an off-the-records governmental intelligence agency gone rogue, pursuing a cut-throat attitude to its own vision of world order and willing to butcher agents from other groups with little hesitation. The order fears that TIBICENA may be also be a Norça or Upeo wa Macho catspaw, and it seems to have links to a UAN 'false god' cult called the Vigilant (see ***Æon Æxpansion***, p.101).

The psi orders all revolve around their proxies to a greater or lesser extent, but they are never the only individuals holding sway within the organization.

## REBECCA BUE LI

Proxy Bue Li is dying. Despite the best vitakinetic efforts from Proxy Dr. Matthew Zweidler himself, the malignancy of the degenerative Quantum Flux disease ravaging her body has proven impossible to stop. Zweidler designed a custom biotech life support pod to maintain Bue Li's physical form while he works on a cure, but even this technology barely keeps her systems functioning. Alarmingly, the pod shows early signs of having contracted the Corruption disease itself as its functional efficiency declines slowly but inevitably each day.

Illness hasn't stopped Rebecca managing her psi order or playing a guiding role in China's and humanity's futures. She operates through others via her powerful telepathy, usually only nudging people towards making decisions or taking actions she desires. Occasionally she takes control of willing vessels and directly intervenes; unfortunately, never as herself.

Through the Ministry's culture of openness, and the nature of telepathy, most within the order know the truth of Bue Li's condition. No one has breached the proxy's trust in revealing this secret; the Ministry watches out for its own in sympathy as this burden of knowledge is sometimes immense. Outside the order, only a handful of people are aware — Bue Li's fellow proxies, and a few in China's upper echelons of power. Only Dr. Zweidler and Bienvenido Veneracion (below) understand a new horror has begun to take hold of Rebecca; she has compartmentalized this knowledge from her telepaths to prevent adding to their burden. The disease's Corruption energies have advanced their antagonism against Bue Li's psi, beginning to impact her ability to use her psionic abilities. Her power failures have been minor, so far — a slight decrease in duration, a minimal increase in effort to manifest effects — but Proxy Bue Li fears the day she'll be locked inside her own dying mind and be unable to commune with her order.

## BIENVENIDO VENERACION

Veneracion's influence over the Ministry of Noetic Affairs surprises those unaware of his lifelong history with proxy Rebecca Bue Li. Bienvenido isn't a psion. He isn't even a member if the Ministry. Nonetheless, he's been close to the proxy since long before her ascent to power, when she was simply another politician entertaining grand visions for a better future. The Filipino's prominence has grown as Rebecca's ailment worsens; he's increasingly the point of contact for those wanting to draw on her expertise and advice despite her condition. To order members, he offers a nonjudgmental, friendly ear that's not bound up in the intrigues of Chinese politics, and good advice drawn from decades of working alongside the proxy. His influence rankles some Noetic Affairs psions, but the Ministry of State Security sees him as an even bigger concern and is actively maneuvering against him.

## GAO LIAN

Gao Lian is perhaps the most personally dangerous psion on the Ministry's roster, and a nationalist hardliner. It's not just her raw psychokinetic talent that makes her so influential; it's her willingness to get her hands dirty — or bloody. She's the longest-serving triumvirate member on the panel of three directors heading up the Office of Noetic Security, re-elected repeatedly by the wing of the division who share her hard-nosed approach to politics. Gao Lian isn't duplicitous or cut-throat towards her fellow psions, but she makes no secret of backing projects and schemes that push the limits of what the Ministry considers ethical. However, she is *absolutely* committed to the lives of her peers. Her tally of kills in service is so large because she tends to leap right into the fire when crisis places operatives under threat.

## HUO ZHIROU

An idealist pursuing the vision of an interconnected humanity free from strife, Zhirou holds managerial positions in both the Fundamental Communication and Echo Archive projects. She worked a stint with Cognitive Hazard, and is the first port of call for many Noetics Institutes agents whenever the truly weird crops up in the line of duty. Zhirou is a bottomless well of optimism who sees the beneficial possibilities in almost everything. She also has strong friendships with a number of ISRA psions and can put Ministry agents in touch with an extensive list of esoteric and fringe scientists across academia.

### RONG QIANG

A soft-spoken man, Rong Qiang's reserved appearance belies the cold mind beneath. A veteran front-liner in the Office of Noetic Security, Qiang currently manages a swathe of deep-cover operations across China and beyond. He has few concerns about damaging the fragile minds of baselines. Qiang isn't a nationalist or hardliner, but rather a psionic supremacist who believes psions, and telepaths in particular, are essentially just *better* than neutrals, and that frankly the Ministry should be running China outright. He goes beyond the remit of his assigned operations to illegally influence Chinese politicians and other pivotal individuals and is involved in the Shadow Puppet Theater.

### HYON JEONG-HO

Hyon Jeong-Ho is uncomfortably aware of how much the Ministry prizes his talents. He's a highly capable teleporter in charge of a team who tracks covert operatives, key Ministry personnel, *and* various Chinese and Autonomous Region VIPs, ready to yank them out of crisis situations if necessary. Should someone attempt to assassinate a state minister, or a deep cover telepath find herself compromised with a kill team closing in fast, Jeong-Ho will quickly join the relevant mind-share network to assess and make a decision. The Ministry prefers more mundane methods for extracting personnel from dangerous situations, so his teleportation is the back-up failsafe, but it's proven its worth several times so far. Other agents see him as something of a guardian angel, pulling their rears out of the fire. The Korean agent doesn't particularly enjoy his work, and firmly disagrees with some of the weighting on the priority extraction lists that place the lives of politicians above his psion peers. However, he understands the importance of his Aptitude and sees the responsibility as a necessary and unavoidable sacrifice until there are others like him in the order.

## PERSONS OF INTEREST

The Ministry closely watches its strays. The order doesn't like wanderers, and views those who'd willingly leave the close telepathic community with suspicion. Authorized departures undergo an information quarantine period, cut out of Ministry business for several months before being released from service. Unauthorized departures spur a hunt for the fugitive psion, and the Ministry is *very* stubborn in the pursuit of such renegades.

### ZHENG FANG

Fang is a charmer, her infectious grin and thrill-seeking manner winning admirers and friends across the globe. She's a freelance telepath who found the close tapestry of the Ministry claustrophobic. She didn't want to work for China, and she didn't want to share her feelings through telepathic communion. Fang vastly prefers to be the one reading *other* peoples' minds, thank you very much. The telepath pays little heed to which side of the law an employer is on but retains some ethical boundaries and hates using her Aptitude to directly cause harm to others' minds. As far as the Ministry is concerned, though, Fang is a model freelancer, because she keeps in regular contact with her old handlers in the psi order and feeds useful tidbits back home. She'll even work directly with Noetic Affairs teams if she has superior local knowledge they need. In return, she can call on the Chinese foreign office for safety or resources in a pinch.

### CHRISTOPHER WEN

While he was never technically a member of the Ministry, Christopher was dunked in the Telepathy Prometheus Chamber and trained internally by the Ministry for a full three-year term as part of a deal with the United Nations Commission of Noetic Oversight. Now he's something of a symbol, an olive branch offered to the UNCNO. He's immersed in Ministry fieldcraft and intelligence techniques, familiar with its methods and culture. Christopher is stern and dedicated to his work above all else. Sometimes he resents the expectations placed upon him by both his UNCNO superiors and the Ministry, but he dutifully labors on, building trust between the two bodies. Noetics Affairs psions can rely on Christopher to give them a fair hearing if they cross the UNCNO, and to be quick to take heed of intelligence relevant to crisis situations. However, he's determined to avoid a reputation of going soft on the order who trained him, so scrutinizes their actions more diligently than less-motivated Noetic Commissioners might bother with.

### CLEAR THOUGHT NOETIC THERAPIES

This team of three ex-Ministry telepaths — Zhao Wei, Hirai Hachiro, and Patricia Ziyambi — left the order at different times but joined forces to establish their

own clinic. The Clear Thought psions are well out of the international espionage game, instead offering mental treatment and therapy augmented by telepathic healing. Exploiting their continued close relationship with the Ministry of Noetic Affairs, the three license Noetics Institutes' psionic biotech and apply it to civilian ends, building and exploring more sophisticated psychotherapy and psychosurgery techniques. The Clear Thought clinic is in the FSA, where they principally work for extremely wealthy customers. The Ministry makes good money off the Clear Thought licensing arrangements, and some members wonder if it could provide the template for a new division working hand in hand with the Æsculapian Order.

### Kam Yu

When Kam Yu fled the Ministry, she went out with a literal bang, killing her partner and several Ministry of State Security agents with an improvised explosive before fleeing into the arms of an Aberrant cult she was supposed to be investigating. Since then, Yu's been on the run, with the Ministry's hunting hounds never far behind. She's a black-market renegade psion, willing to do whatever for whoever as long as the price is right and they can help her get another few steps ahead. Yu will violate the sanctity of the mind, force people to kill themselves, and whip up angry mobs to tear apart the innocent without the slightest qualm. Still, it didn't start out this way; the Ministry of State Security subverted her when she was still vulnerable during the earliest days of her training. Their attempts to fan her paranoia towards her fellow agents and usher her into their arms went horribly wrong, proving far more effective than they'd expected and prompting the violent spiral that resulted in her current state. She remains a priority target, with overseas Ministry operations keeping constant vigil for signs of her presence.

# Mind Games

Ministry campaigns focus on the mind at the literal level, with telepathic spies plucking thoughts from their targets' heads, and the metaphorical, with mind-games between psychic investigators and murderous criminals, or researchers delving into the cultural extelligences of entire nations. While games where every character is a member of the Ministry of Noetic Affairs suggest stories with a focus on Chinese matters, the order offers plenty of scope for a narrative uncoiling far beyond national boundaries. Ministry agents engage in international espionage, cultural research, and diplomacy that reaches the very stars.

## Mental Unity

The most significant difference between a Ministry campaign and other orders is the prevalence of Telepathy. Mind-sharing and mental networks are key to the Ministry experience, with bio-apps facilitating a telepathic community even for those who don't possess the Aptitude. Any Ministry team has an expectation of utter honesty within its tapestry of minds; the culture pushes characters to be open about how they feel or ideas they have, and to be accepting if they have to set those feelings and thoughts aside for the greater good of the mission. Honesty isn't always kind, for that matter; agents need to learn to roll with the mental punches when they experience someone else's truthful assessment of their competence or decisions.

This regular telepathic networking places trust as a core and strong element of a Ministry campaign. Players of Ministry psions can usually expect their characters to trust and support each other. In turn, stories that *do* poke and prod at that assumption of unity become more meaningful. If an encounter with State Security goons leaves a psion questioning the loyalty of a peer or discovering a hidden Ministry program of questionable ethics and a superior with sinister motives, it hits much harder because of the established baseline of honesty. Paranoia and suspicion *within* the ranks *really* shake Ministry psions. They're used to being able to play everyone else, dipping into the pool of lies and manipulation like sharks; making them the prey in that game of deceit is particularly powerful.

The Ministry of Noetic Affairs' flexible system means player characters can come together from across any of the three divisions, bringing a wide variety of expertise and experience with them. While a team will usually have a senior manager or handler, the expectation is of consensus decision-making, with every member contributing towards the group's overall choices. This has certain implications from a playability point of view; some groups will take to this sort of internal organization easily, but others

may tend to descend into circular arguments without a clear leader or find that no-one is willing to push for a decision and lapse into passivity.

For groups who do struggle with the idea, it can be worthwhile to assign different specialties to different characters, giving them the final say when it comes to their area of expertise. Alternatively, the group may pick a leader who gets the final say and breaks deadlocks; after all, if the consensus is the team needs one decision-maker, then that's a perfectly acceptable manifestation of Ministry techniques. Finally, some groups will benefit from just having the Storyguide

make a noticeable indication — raising a red card or simply stating it's decision time — to point out when they're caught in a circular discussion and need to come to a conclusion.

Characters should regularly off-load mental labor onto other teams, throwing their questions or problems into the wider net of the Ministry and rapidly receiving thought-out conclusions that large numbers of minds have mulled over. This can be a challenge for a Storyguide to keep up with, but where inspiration for a particular breakthrough or new perspective is lacking, you can simply have the daisy-chaining mind-networks provide a small amount of Enhancement to a planned roll. This represents scrutiny and feedback polishing the rough edges off an idea without having to meticulously describe what, exactly, two dozen other psions think about a situation.

## COUNTERESPIONAGE

The obvious starting point for a Ministry campaign is one that examines the order's role in intelligence and espionage, but not all games need to focus on spies mind-controlling politicians. A story could instead revolve around threat and security management for vital personnel — the team might watch over Chinese dignitaries, escort a foreign politician, or provide telepathic surveillance for a UN delegation. This reverses the usual Ministry role of seeking out secrets; instead, the agents watch for threats, try to shield their wards from the telepathic efforts of others, or fend off spies just as talented at fieldcraft as the Noetics Affairs operatives are.

A story might also involve giving secrets and information away. This could be a game of diplomacy, identifying the right people at the right time to hand critical information to so the result will be favorable for the Ministry. It involves covertly planting intelligence into the possession or minds of their targets without a trace that would ever suggest the Ministry was actively influencing the situation. Maybe it's the middle of a crisis where Ministry meddling would simply cause more trouble — or maybe the psions are trying to point baseline investigators at a political opponent, setting them up in a way that will keep the order's hands clean.

For campaigns set firmly in the heartlands of Chinese governance, a team of psions assigned to high-ranking cabinet members and ministers faces a hybrid of Ministry influence and counterespionage. Trying to keep the ministers safe, maneuvering the shifting allegiances of the government, and subtly influencing the politicians according to Ministry agendas will keep the team's hands more than full. Ironically, this sort of story likely involves little actual telepathy in favor of more mundane forms of influence and manipulation.

## PSYCHONAUTS AND CARETAKERS

For a real change of pace, consider a Ministry team assembled to tackle sensitive cases of mental investigation and healing. Whether picking up the pieces in the aftermath of a crisis, or working purely to help repair wounded minds, the team delve into the damaged psyches of people who have been through tumultuous or frightening events and attempt to put them back together. This can lead to surreal scenes set in the mental landscapes of the patients as characters try to puzzle out what's wrong, or a fusion of mental and physical clues that will reveal the truth of what happened at a critical juncture. However, it is important to emphasize that roleplaying safety tools and consideration of safe play techniques are **highly recommended** for a story like this, due to the risk of touching on real traumas that players may themselves have experienced.

Another idea for a gentler Ministry campaign features the characters focusing on the most subtle aspects of the Office of Noetic Security's work, trying to improve peoples' lives at a personal level to influence them away from disastrous outcomes. This is a game of good deeds and guardian angels; the team look closely at a few troubled or unlucky people and try to figure out how to help without revealing their involvement. It features a minimum of flashy firearms or action scenes beyond stepping in to stop an abusive person or the like, and instead goes into detail about the everyday difficulties of citizens and reflects on the line between respectful aid and invasive authority.

Finally, a Cognitive Hazard game switches the focus onto the plain weird. The team are the ones sent in to deal with hostile attack memes on the OpNet that may actually be sentient, Aberrants that rewrite peoples' brains, and mysteriously powerful mundane objects suggesting a more occult aspect to the world than science can easily answer. This is the Ministry gone gonzo, trying to break up hive-mind cults who worship a telephone that speaks the future, or chasing down artists whose painted images force viewers to act out the scenes within. Maybe it's psionics, maybe it's Quantum Flux, maybe it's stuff you'll never have an answer for — but *someone* needs to stop it and clean up the mess afterwards, and this time, that someone is *you*.

## BOLDLY GO

Ministry campaigns also offer space for more far-reaching ventures. In a story of new worlds and aliens, Telepathy is a vital key for humanity's understanding of this vast, strange galaxy, and the Ministry often dispatches its agents to help bridge the communication gap.

Of course, just because Telepathy lets a psion communicate doesn't necessarily mean they truly *understand* an alien. Simple messages may fail to reveal the depth of how and why an alien feels or acts as it does and unpicking the weave of a new peoples' cultural fabric can be fascinating right up until it explodes in a diplomatic minefield — telepaths have enough power to make really *interesting* social faux pas. It demands the attention of a whole team of specialists, each bringing their own expertise to the task of pushing back the boundaries between human and alien comprehension.

Any such campaign will need to tackle themes of colonialism and interference and to tread carefully. Æon Trinity is a science fiction game, but real life provides a context of invasive intrusion and power imbalances between interacting cultures. Sometimes, a team may need to step back and consider whether what is right from a human viewpoint is necessarily right for an alien people. They'll need to make those tough decisions while juggling similar considerations about protecting humanity and aliens alike.

As well as the general Ministry Society Path (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, p.158), this section provides new Paths reflecting specific Roles within the order that support and assist its members in their core duties.

## OFFICER OF ALIEN AFFAIRS (ROLE)

The character belongs to the Office of Alien Affairs, a bureau of psions who handle diplomacy with and investigation of alien species. She may be an empathic mediator with a knack for understanding what an alien mind values, or a vigilant guardian watchful for signs of existential threats to humanity. Ministry agents often travel far and wide, but she goes much farther than most; she's likely seen distant worlds and encountered beings that challenge even her understanding.

**Example Connections:** Project Cyclops researcher, Leviathan crew, xenoarchaeologist, diplomat

**Skills:** Empathy, Enigmas, Humanities, Persuasion

**Edges:** Alien Empathy, Danger Sense, Enhanced Attunement, Favored Mode, Keen Sense, Photographic Memory, Psycommunion, Iron Will, Skilled Liar

### SPECIAL EDGE: ALIEN EMPATHY ( • )

**Prerequisite:** Officer of Alien Affairs path, at least one dot in Rapport.

Trained to analyze the mental patterns of an alien mind and quickly discern any anchoring similarities to the human experience, your character possesses an incredible talent for bridging the gap of understanding with non-human species. She gains 2 Enhancement on interactions with aliens, whether mundane or psionic, but only for the purposes of buying off Complications that may arise from the differences between alien and humanity.

### SPECIAL EDGE: PSYCOMMUNION ( • )

**Prerequisite:** At least one dot in any Telepathy Aptitude, any Ministry Path.

Your character is adept at participating in, maintaining, and drawing upon mind-shared networks. She can participate in any number of Mindspeak or Network discussions simultaneously, with no penalty for splitting her attention among the conversations. In action scenes, she treats a Network as a source of +1 Scale for the purposes of her roll to determine Initiative.

## SPECIAL NOETIC ASSISTANT (ROLE)

The character belongs to the Special Noetic Assistance Project, the much-rumored augmented elites who serve as remote eyes and even puppets for telepathic operators. She has undergone extensive training with having a "rider" mind aboard her brain and may also have received invasive bodyjack implants (p. 186) to deepen the link between operator and assistant. She may be a spec ops soldier, envoy, spy, or someone utterly mundane who no-one would ever suspect of being a psionic node for distant masters; whatever her origins, she's been through a brutal regimen to hone her body even further in the service of the Ministry.

**Example Connections:** Army officer, civil servant, criminal, Ministry psion

**Skills:** Athletics, Empathy, Integrity, Larceny

**Edges:** Cool Under Fire, Covert, Dual Minded, Iron Will, Skilled Liar, Telepathic Resistance

CHAPTER SIX

# NORÇA

"Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it."
— Paulo Freire

The Nova Força Nacional is an organization with many faces. Depending on the situation and the observer, the Norça have reputations as everything from heroes to shadowy manipulators, from conservationists to spies, from protectors of the people to Pai de Norça's personal secret police. This range of perceived identities, often held simultaneously despite obvious contradictions, is fitting given the biokinetic order's ability to appear as anyone, anywhere humanity may roam. The Norça can shift through endless masks, adjusting their identities as easily as they draw breath. This array of perspectives, all true from a certain point of view, ultimately serve to increase the myth associated with Norça, exactly as Giuseppe del Fuego intended.

Del Fuego is a complicated man with a simple motivation: to protect humanity at all costs. While technology may take humans to the stars, Earth is home. Without it, humanity has nothing. This core belief informed the activism and ecoterrorism of del Fuego's youth and stands as the driving principle behind all Norça activity to this day. The theatrics and legend-crafting surrounding the Norça grow from this basic root and serve to bolster this basic purpose. There are hundreds of reasons the Norça cultivate individual perceptions, but they all fall under the larger umbrella of creating a mythical heroic narrative for the Norça. This is vitally important to del Fuego, as he wants his psi order to not only believe that narrative, but embody its ideals. As far as Pai de Norça is concerned, his *filhos* (or, children) must believe the myth, because they must *be* the myth. The Earth must be preserved, humanity must be protected, and there are none as capable of meeting the challenge as the Norça. Proxy del Fuego expects only the best from his people, and his expectations are especially high for psions. He regularly refers to the Prometheus Effect as stealing the fire of the gods, and endeavors to help all psions in his psi order prove themselves worthy of their remarkable powers.

# SUDAMÉRICAN HEROES

Those who join the Norça, whether psion, neutral, or Talent, must understand the gravity of their mission and the responsibility that accompanies it. The Norça must rise to all challenges, overcome all obstacles, and be heroes worthy of the mythos surrounding their order. Excellence is the expectation in the Nova Força Nacional. Proxy del Fuego provides incredible resources to his order so they can meet and exceed those expectations. Equipment is either top of the line, cutting edge technology, or the newest iteration of old, proven, reliable tools. Norça coffers run over with infusions from innumerable income streams. The order can finance virtually any operation imaginable while maintaining ample support for the comfort and safety of the Norça and their families. If there is a tool the Norça needs to accomplish a mission, del Fuego will see it built or bought. Norça provides its people every tool they could possibly require and expects only excellence of service in return.

Pai de Norça holds no expectation of his filhos that he does not also hold for himself. Del Fuego believes with fanatical faith that only he and his Norça are truly capable of ensuring humanity's safety and prosperity. Of course, he respects the roles of the other psi orders, the Æon Trinity, and the UN in keeping humanity safe, but that does not mean he trusts them. Norça dedicates a significant portion of its time and resources to following up on, or being directly involved with, the activities of these groups to ensure a beneficial outcome and clean up mistakes as needed. Norça only shares intelligence with those outside the order when del Fuego finds it necessary to do so. While Norça has no authority over these other factions outside Sudamérica, they are also not beholden to them beyond the most basic authority each organization wields within their sphere of influence. While Del Fuego is rarely deliberately provocative to the other psi orders, he is equally rarely forthcoming. He subjects the Norça to no authority save his own unless doing so serves a tangible purpose.

Behind the mythology and romance of their public persona, the Norça are one of the most effective guardians of Earth and humanity. Holding true to del

Fuego's philosophy, this work begins at home. Norça biotechnology has revolutionized life in Sudamérica, reversing decades of industrial damage and reducing the remaining impact of the Aberrant War. Norça is actively involved in the creation of biotech cities, ranging from the massive Brasilia BioArcology to the proliferation of smaller biotech villages, both legal and less than legal, in the Amazon. Within these wonders of bioengineering, Norça biokinetics and vitakinetics perform noetic surgeries on those seeking to achieve a perfected realization of the self through the body-altering practice of Reconstruir (**Terra Firma**, p. 70). Not only do the people of Sudamérica enjoy the physical protection and technological benefits of their association with the Norça, they enjoy full self-determination of appearance, sex characteristics, skin tone, number and arrangement of limbs, and even environmental survival capacities. If you want gills or a prehensile tail, the Norça can provide. This has fostered an environment of tolerance unlike anywhere else in settled space. Pai de Norça believes humans stripped of bigotry and division are far more effective and productive, and he aims to prove that theory in Sudamérica.

Where the Norça homeland suffers from ongoing Corruption in the wake of the Aberrant War, the psi order rises to the challenge of keeping the area secured while studying the effects of the blight. In the secret Venezuela Blight Research Station, Norça labors to understand, solve, and reverse the unpredictable causes of Corruption sickness and Corruption-based mutation. The information gained in this clandestine facility drags human knowledge closer to understanding the forces that create Aberrants. Del Fuego hopes that one day, the work done at the Venezuela Station can cleanse Sudamérica entirely of blight.

Beyond the shores of Sudamérica, the Norça work in several capacities, with each task ultimately pointed toward achieving the safety, prosperity, and growth of humanity. To the outside observer, the actions of the Norça may seem confusing and contradictory. Most nations suspect the Norça is engaged in international espionage, though few can speculate as to what the biokinetic's endgame might be with such activities. This leads to widespread suspicion of the Norça, despite little evidence that the biokinetic order is doing anything illegal or immoral.

# NA FAMILIA

Norça adheres to a structure of cells consisting of between five and twenty people. Norça cells operate in a family-like structure which Norça call *na familia*, or 'in the family.' Members of the same cell often refer to one another as irmão and irmã (brother and sister). A tia or tio (aunt or uncle) supervises the cell and some cells have multiple tias or tios. Neutrals and psions both appear within this cell structure and there is no discrimination between the two in terms of authority or job assignment. An experienced neutral can easily achieve a supervisory role over multiple inexperienced psions. Norça values results and places their personnel where they are best suited to produce.

As is fitting for the shapeshifting psi order, command structure of a cell is typically fluid and mutable in all but the direst emergencies. Regardless of who sits in the supervisory role in a cell, the person best suited to lead in a given situation is usually given the authority to do so. Norça values competence and expertise. It is not unheard of for some Norça to chafe against the structure of a cell, especially in the beginning of their time with the psi order. Like any family unit, most cells go through a period of growing pains as they figure out who is best suited to manage which responsibilities. This normally works itself out, ending with a stronger, more responsive, and more effective cell. On occasion, an individual Norça fails to adjust to this mutable structure. Either they resent sharing the spotlight with their irmãos and irmãs or they are uncomfortable when thrust into leadership positions requiring their expertise. The Norça work with individuals suffering through such struggles to provide coping skills and to reevaluate assignments in order to ensure no one is being set up to fail. Transfer to one of Pai de Norça's pet projects more suitable for single operatives awaits those who simply cannot adjust to life among a Norça cell.

## DIVISIONS

Each Norça cell belongs to a division, which serves as a broad operational umbrella. Divisions indicate a cell's area of expertise and determine the bureaucracy the cell interacts with. Having said that, the lines between divisions in the Norça are as flexible as the biokinetics themselves. Many cells perform tasks

that fall under the purview of more than one division. Norça assignments frequently pull members from multiple cells across division lines to achieve a short-term goal or address a complicated issue.

## Centinelas de la Noche – Night Sentinels

When people outside Sudamérica picture the Norça, they often think of operatives that would fall under the purview of Centinelas de la Noche. A common stereotype outsiders hold of the Norça is the shapeshifting infiltrator who uses biokinesis to sneak into organizations and governments by assuming false identities. This concept has become ingrained in popular culture to the point that the "Norça spy" is a trope used in almost every drama holosim produced by OBC. The Sydney based media giant claims perpetuating the stereotype is not meant to be insulting. They also emphatically deny their rivalry with Sudamérican media empire NSM has anything to do with their treatment of biokinesis in their programming. Rumor has it proxy del Fuego is rather fond of the OBC portrayal of Norça, as it helps carry the myth of the Centinelas into every home in settled space.

While there is some truth, if slightly embellished by OBC, in the image of the Norça infiltration expert, they are hardly the only roles in Centinelas de la Noche. The cells of this division work to collect and collate intelligence on any targets the Norça feel merit surveillance. Each cell remains unaware of the work other cells are doing. It is not unusual to have four or five cells working on a particular target, each unaware of the involvement of the others. In such cases, requiring in depth-analysis, the data collected by disparate cells moves through blind drops and unaware couriers to another cell who processes the data without any true knowledge of its origins. Members of the Centinelas de la Noche do not question the data they receive for such analysis assignments; they merely trust the competence of its collection by their fellow Norça. Once analysis is complete, the findings go to an appropriate contact within Centinelas de la Noche, or if necessary, to the Cantores for appropriate assignment.

## Guerreiros do Alvorecer – Dawn Warriors

The Guerreiros do Alvorecer are the military arm of the Norça. Those who operate openly enjoy fame across Sudamérica and receive treatment befitting popular legendary figures comparable to superheroes of the 20th century. Several Dawn Warrior cells operate in the large population centers of Sudamérica, patrolling to maintain public safety, but also acting as an ongoing reminder that the heroes of the Norça stand ready to serve the people. In addition to working alongside law enforcement and stamping

### RANK AND THE GUERREIROS DO ALVORECER

Guerreiros do Alvorecer uses a truncated collection of ranks based on the Colombian military.

**Soldado:** This is the rank granted to any Norça assigned to Guerreiros do Alvorecer. If multiple divisions are working together on a project, the Guerreiros do Alvorecer contingent of the group applies this rank to all non Guerreiros do Alvorecer personnel, unless directed otherwise by a *Teniente* or higher.

**Dragoneante:** Operatives who have proven themselves on a mission achieve this rank.

**Sargento Primero:** Norça at this rank assume the day to day command role in their cell. Comparable to tio or tia in other divisions.

**Teniente:** When multiple cells of Guerreiros do Alvorecer work in tandem, the Teniente commands that joint effort.

**Capitán:** Norça of this rank oversee the Guerreiros over a large region. Most continents on Earth have one *Capitán,* though three at this rank divide responsibility for operations in Sudamérica, and two split jurisdiction over the settlements of Oceania.

**Mayor:** The Mayor oversees all Guerreiros do Alvorecer operations on a celestial body and its associated space. There is currently a Mayor assigned for Earth, Luna, Mars, Averiguas, Bullseye, Karoo Mining Colony, Khantze Lu Ge, and Qinshui. All answer directly and exclusively to Pai de Norça.

out Aberrant threats that might appear, these public Guerreiros do Alvorecer provide civil service on their patrols. These activities range from helping with public works like sanitation to participating in block parties and festivals. Some of these Guerreiros go so far as to offer pet walking services and grocery delivery to the elderly in the communities they patrol. Giuseppe del Fuego wants Sudamérica to see Norça as heroes of the people, and through the public face of Guerreiros do Alvorecer, he broadcasts that vision throughout the arcologies and villages of the continent.

Beyond the public relations patrols, Guerreiros do Alvorecer is effectively an extranational military force. Though the order frowns on rigid chains of command under most circumstances, the Guerreiros do Alvorecer maintain military discipline. Each member of the division holds a rank, though these ranks mean little outside the division itself.

Cells operating less publicly, whether within Sudamérica or beyond its shores, adhere to stricter protocols regarding tactics, public engagement, and general behavior. In most areas where Guerreiros do Alvorecer maintains a presence, Norça has negotiated operating parameters with the local authorities. In order to preserve trust and transparency with partnered authorities, the Guerreiros adhere strictly to the letter and spirit of these protocols. Should a situation require a less legitimate approach the senior officer in the area puts in an encrypted and encoded request for support from Centinelas de la Noche.

## Caçadores de Segredos – Hunters of Secrets

The Caçadores de Segredos are the scientific wing of the Norça. Few outside Sudamérica imagine the engineers and researchers of this division when thinking of the psi order. The work of the Caçadores de Segredos happens behind the scenes, out of the public eye, and receives very little press attention. When Norça reveals the results of these experiments, the credit is simply ascribed to the order as a whole. Outside of Sudamérica, many see scientific advancement as a footnote of Norça activity but is perhaps the central point of the order's reputation within their homeland. The Sudamérican people see everything from the smallest personal bioapps, to surgical modifications, to massive BioArcologies as the work of Norça.

Caçadores de Segredos cells each specialize in a specific discipline. One cell might focus on bioapp design, while another focuses on perfecting psionic surgery, and a third focuses on noetic theory. These cells often share data and personnel more openly than other divisions of the Norça, though communication between cells that do not actively share personnel follows the same clandestine channels and procedures as other Norça divisions when passing data back and forth. Any research and development is considered sensitive material, but there are some cells within the division working in areas that merit additional security. Some cells, such as those working in the Venezuela Blight Research Station do not broadcast the results of their work anywhere. Instead, they keep their findings safe and secure until proxy del Fuego can personally review the results.

## Hermanos Guardianes – Brother's Keepers

This division is home to Norça first responders. When disasters, accidents, or other emergencies occur, the Hermanos Guardianes rush to the scene providing medical care and damage control while securing or evacuating those affected. While Sudamérica's BioArcologies are self-regulating and self-repairing structures that are generally resistant to even severe natural disasters, there are still hundreds of hardtech settlements that have no special protection against the elements. Hermanos Guardianes cells appear throughout the conventional cities and villages of the continent, standing at the ready in case of emergencies. The few Hermanos Guardianes cells in the BioArcologies focus almost entirely on providing medical care.

Hermanos Guardianes operate in basically the same fashion everywhere in near-Earth space. They usually coordinate with local municipalities or law enforcement. In regions where the Æsculapian Order maintains a strong presence, the Hermanos Guardianes prefer to coordinate their efforts through the Rexs as opposed to government bodies. This is especially true in areas of Europe affected by the Esperanza crash where the line between the Æsculapian Order and Hermanos Guardianes blurs to non-existence. With the exception of the work being done at the Venezuela Blight Research Station, this relationship is probably the closest Norça maintains with another psi order.

Beyond the Kuiper belt, Hermanos Guardianes broadens their focus to include emergency response in hostile situations. This is more a function of practicality than any deliberate organizational design. There simply are not enough psions in the extrasolar colonies to justify sidelining well trained and capable disaster relief squads. A cell of combat specialists from Guerreiros

## TALENTS IN THE CANTORES

Talents with a penchant for bureaucracy, organizational skills, and workflow efficiency often wind up working in the Cantores. This is not a deliberate manipulation or official policy, but rather a side effect of the rigorous testing all Norça recruits undergo. The need for almost superhuman excellence in logistics among the Cantores provides an environment where bureaucratic Talents can thrive.

do Alvorecer often accompany Hermanos Guardianes when responding to an emergency in the colonies.

### CANTORES – SINGERS

The Singers are responsible for maintaining the daily operations of Psi Order Norça. Running a galaxy-spanning collection of psions and support staff is a herculean task. Adding further complication is the fact numerous Norça operations do not officially exist. The Singers must maintain cohesive management despite being effectively blind to nearly half of the order's activities. The Singers achieve this goal by maintaining flexible resource assignments, breaking large tasks into smaller goals that a single cell can easily address, and through the remarkable talents (and Talents) employed by the division.

Several Norça clairsentients work among the Cantores. Their aptitude is invaluable in allocating resources and projecting possible outcomes of shifts in workforce. The Cantores assign and scrutinize even those Norça involved in secret operations at some point in their career. The high concentration of clears in the division provides Norça a means to track, observe, and remotely assist otherwise deniable assets in the field.

Apart from logistics, the Cantores also handle Norça public relations. This includes the generation and distribution of press releases, public service announcements, and advertisements. The Cantores manufacture photo opportunities, coordinate charitable activities, and work tirelessly to project the image of Norça as heroes of the people.

# NORÇA PRIORIDADES

Thanks to their cell structure providing an agile response to the needs of the overall Norça agenda, or *prioridades,* this psi order maintains involvement in numerous projects across settled space. Short-term involvement in myriad endeavors is common for Norça, though even the smallest activity usually feeds into the order's larger plan.

## CORRUPTION RESEARCH

While the Æsculapian Order, Orgotek, and the Æon Trinity dominate the public face of research into reversing the effects of Corruption, many of the greatest advances in this field are actually being made in secret by the Norça. Since founding the psi order, proxy del Fuego has been conducting experiments and overseeing research into ways to negate or mitigate Corruption. During the Chitra Bhanu purge, del Fuego rescued a small number of quantakinetics and placed them under Norça protection. Not only did this give him insight into the events leading up to the purge, but it also granted him access to some of the greatest minds in noetic theory outside his own order. Integrating the Chitra Bhanu's research and knowledge into Norça's own has rocketed Norça to the cutting edge of noetic science.

Most researchers working on this project work at the Venezuela Blight Zone Research Center, which is also secretly the headquarters of the revived Chitra Bhanu, and home to their Prometheus Chamber. As a result, some researchers at this site are working on a top secret project to find a way to overcome the limitation that psions can only master a single Aptitude. Proxy del Fuego hopes the opportunity to extensively study two Prometheus Chambers will provide key insights in how to modify one or more chambers to produce psions who can use two, three, or perhaps even all eight Aptitudes.

### SITE NO. 24

Located in a remote and largely subterranean compound on Averiguas, this research facility does not officially exist. The Brazilian government is aware there is a Norça base located somewhere in the mesas north of New Hope, but they do not know its exact location, nor its purpose. Members of the Workers' Council who are not part of the Norça are basically unaware of

## QUANTAKINESIS AND SITE NO. 24

Site No. 24 is home to many secrets. Even the researchers who work and live on site are often unaware of the research done outside their own cell. The secrecy of this facility makes it an ideal place for quantakinetics working with Norça to operate relatively freely. When the first Leviathan jumped to Averiguas after the Upeo exodus, del Fuego sent two Chitra Bhanu along with his Norça. If the site was still secure and operational, they were to stay and begin conducting research while also keeping any eye on the facility for any dangerous breaches of protocol or containment. If they discovered the site compromised, they were to salvage what research they could before eliminating all evidence of the experiments there.

Fortunately, when the Mae de Ceo arrived on Averiguas, the crew found Site 24 operational. The Chibs, operating under the cover of being new Norça recruits, took their post at Site No. 24 where they remain assigned.

the location, though it is a common belief among these laborers that the Norça maintains some kind of secret facility on Averiguas. The Norça on Averiguas not assigned to Site No. 24 know only that it is secret and that they must defend it at all costs. Only the researchers assigned to the site and Major Martín Vargas know the truth about the research conducted at Site No. 24.

Site No. 24 is the largest and most advanced research facility Norça maintains dedicated to Corruption research. Strong security measures, ethical policies, and division of labor keep the project safe and productive. Cells of Caçadores de Segredos work independently on compartmentalized study. One may be researching the effect of Corruption on human liver cells. The next lab over may focus on quantifying the thresholds at which Corruption interferes with applications of psi. A third lab may be raising hydroponic plants in water infused with Corruption-free Quantum Flux. The researchers send the data from these experiments to Earth for review, usually at the Venezuela Blight Research Station.

### VENEZUELA BLIGHT RESEARCH STATION

The Venezuela Blight Research Station is a hub for all Corruption and Quantum Flux research conducted by Psi Order Norça. Caçadores de Segredos cells work to collate data from the field, collect samples from within the Blight, and test new theories in subquantum mechanics. The guiding hands and superior knowledge of the Chitra Bhanu help push this research forward, leading to stunning results that would be utterly impossible without their assistance. The Chitra Bhanu at the Venezuela Station are also heavily involved in research dedicated to creating bioapps capable of producing high-level quantakinesis effects. Norça scientists call this breaking through the Quantum Wall and is vital in the quest to end Corruption based disease. Though

the Quantum Wall remains intact, joint efforts by Norça and Chitra Bhanu are far from fruitless. One notable development of this research, the Flux Eater (see p. 178) is on the verge of release to the public as the latest in Norça Corruption remediation biotech.

## PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS

The Norça are heavily involved in paramilitary operations throughout settled space. From quietly supporting rebel movements in the FSA to guerrilla warfare and espionage in the Aberrant controlled regions of Khantze Lu Ge, Norça operatives lay their lives on the line in the pursuit of safety, justice, and victory for humanity.

## AMAZON CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

As the Amazon is a full and vibrant rainforest, teeming with life unseen anywhere else on Earth, it is a common target for poachers. The Amazon Conservation Initiative is a collection of Amazon-dwelling Norça who hunt those that would hunt the rainforest. Cells that belong to the Amazon Conservation Initiative typically dwell in one of the many Amazonian biotech villages, though some of these self-appointed rangers maintain a nomadic life, traveling a circuitous route through the wilds in search of those who would despoil their homeland.

While Sudamérican poachers are not unheard of, most of these interlopers come from the FSA. Corporate executives who want a trophy kill to show off or bragging rights about their "southern safari" often fund such illegal hunting expeditions. Less commonly, these expeditions are scientific in nature. Scientific poachers usually seek samples of rare plants and animals from the rainforest. Unless collectors pay the correct fees and sign royalty agreements in advance, extracting these samples is illegal as is taking them to a laboratory for study.

The purpose of a poaching expedition makes no difference whatsoever to the Norça. Whether someone is there to hunt jaguars or to take clippings from rare plants, the Amazon Conservation Initiative responds with the same swift brutality. If the offender surrenders peacefully and immediately, the Norça confiscates their equipment, releases any captured animals, and turns the poachers over to the nearest government authority. If the interlopers refuse to surrender or respond with violence, the Norça rain down every bit of retribution they can muster. The blood and remains of poachers who resisted an Amazon Conservation Initiative patrol fertilizes several patches of the rainforest.

## Khantze Lu Ge

Norça operatives play a vital role on both fronts in the struggle on Khantze Lu Ge. While the UN army, under the command of General D'Chana, constantly pushes for a high scale open military resolution to the Aberrant infestation, virtually everyone else on the planet thinks this is a bad idea. Proteus operatives stall for time with the UN while collecting intelligence on the plans and movements of both Aberrant camps on this embattled world. Norça biokinetics aid in the intelligence-gathering efforts in a variety of ways. From sneaking into enemy territory as observers to assuming the identities of captured Aberrant spies to infiltrate their organization, Norça strives to find weak spots in Aberrant defenses, gain access to battle plans, and wherever possible, free neutrals trapped under Aberrant control. Some of these undercover missions place the Norça within the Aberrant power structure for weeks or even months.

When the Norça are not gathering intel with Proteus operatives, they are participating alongside Legionnaires in hit-and-run skirmishes with the forces of Kali and Yog-Death. These targeted strikes always aim at a valuable resource, supply chain, or otherwise tactically significant target While these guerrillas aim to do as much damage as possible with their strikes, the primary purpose of these attacks is distraction. Keeping the Aberrants on their toes and on constant lookout for direct, violent conflict provides the distraction necessary to support subtle intelligence operations carried out in cooperation with Proteus.

Norça does not support General D'Chana's plan to unleash nuclear weapons on Aberrant territories, nor do they support any plan that features large scale direct warfare without a congruent evacuation plan for the neutrals who still languish under the rule of demented Aberrants. The Norça are not squeamish about collateral damage or acceptable losses when necessary, but Proteus analysts, Norça statisticians, and the civilian population of Khantze Lu Ge agree the situation has not deteriorated so severely to warrant the loss of an estimated half-million souls.

The Norça truly see themselves as the saviors of humanity and protectors of the Earth. As far as the Norça are concerned there is no duty greater, no calling more sacred, than their own. While this serves as a major point of pride for most Norça, it also leads to a common belief throughout the order in a philosophy that one's ends justify their means. This allows Norça to develop useful relationships with groups the other psi orders might shun.

## ÆON TRINITY

In the months between becoming a proxy and the public reveal of psions at Sydney Spaceport, Giuseppe del Fuego crafted a web of alliances with Sudamérican governments to allow Nova Força Nacional the ability to operate in exchange for protection, technology, and material support. When the orders went public, Norça formalized these preexisting arrangements, giving del Fuego a solid foothold in Sudamérica and reducing his reliance on the Æon Trinity for legitimacy and protection. This has resulted in a position of strength for the Norça when dealing with the Æon Trinity, especially where issues of the homeland are concerned.

Of course, del Fuego is no fool. He knows he needs a functional relationship with Æon for international and interstellar operations. He does not want the actions or positions of the Norça to endanger other psions or unnecessarily complicate their work. As such, Norça carefully measures every instance where they might refuse a request from the Trinity, despite being in the best position to do so of all the psi orders save the Ministry.

## BIOSYSTEMS

This Sudamérican biotech company focuses most of its efforts on consumer-level bioware. Despite this focus, a few promising designs have made their way from BioSystems to the Caçadores de Segredos. These designs, deemed inappropriate for release through BioSystems, tend toward weapons, bioVARGs and vehicles more suited for the battlefield than a city street. When an engineer at BioSystems designs a bioapp that could benefit Norça, they often reach out through intermediaries to establish an extra-corporate research collective. The BioSystems employee takes a sabbatical, during which the Norça maintains their lifestyle. The designer then receives a disposable startup company with which to develop, test, and deploy their new tech. Upon successfully establishing the product, the engineer usually sells the patents, stock, and components to Norça before collapsing their startup. The engineer then returns to their position at BioSystems and Norça walks away with a new biotech toy.

## CHITRA BHANU

The Norça relationship with Chitra Bhanu has become remarkably close in the years since the purge. The Chibs hidden by del Fuego at the time of the purge routinely use the language of the Norça when speaking of each other and their biokinetic colleagues. These survivors have been working and living side by side with Norça for years. While it took some time to establish contact with and foster the trust of Dr. Bhurano and her allies, del Fuego put in the work personally. The truth of the Doyen's betrayal and the manipulation of the other proxies has enraged del Fuego, but also broke his heart for the suffering the quantakinetics needlessly endured.

Proxy del Fuego maintains cool, professional relations with most of the other proxies. His relationship with each proxy is complex. Among those still active in public, he only counts Herzog as a friend. The rest he sees as co-workers or *cúmplices* who he holds varying degrees of respect for or suspicion of. However, years of working closely with Dr. Bhurano have fostered a bond of familial love between the quantakinetic proxy and Pai de Norça. In private conversation, or when speaking only to close insiders, del Fuego refers to Bhurano as "Tia," an honorific he uses with no one else.

## INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF ECOMINING

Norça holds significant interest in several companies that belong to the International Consortium of Ecomining. Apart from the wise business investment of managing the greatest off-earth access to water in the solar system, ICE offers the Norça access to shipping lanes and transit through the asteroid belt and beyond. Through ICE run ships, Norça can move personnel and resources to any of a dozen far flung stations at the edge of the solar system. ICE provides Norça a vital tool in protecting humanity's home.

## MEDELLÍN CARTEL

The Medellín Cartel is one of the closest allies of the Norça, though few in either organization are aware of their connection. Norça funds and directs the cartel's activities, enabling the reborn criminal syndicate to reclaim the power and influence of its heyday before the Aberrant War. The Norça can use the web of resources at the cartel's command in times of need. In fact, that is the very reason for the Medellín Cartel's existence in the 22nd century. While the world thinks the Medellín Cartel is just a glorified street gang, they are in fact one of proxy del Fuego's backup plans. The proxy had the cartel rebuilt to provide a functioning and funded organizational structure Norça could slip into in the event that the order was purged. If the other psi orders, the Trinity, or some other powerful entity mounts a truly threatening assault on the Norça, the biokinetics can discard their current identities and re-emerge as soldiers, lieutenants, and bosses in the Medellín Cartel. Del Fuego keeps this plan very quiet. Only a handful of Norça are aware of the true nature of the cartel. But if the need should arise, del Fuego can disseminate the plan through the ranks of the Norça in short order.

## NSM

The public relations cells of the Cantores maintain a close relationship with the newscasters and station managers of New Sudamérican Media. In addition to the obvious puff pieces and various reports on Norça activities in the public eye, NSM produces a remarkable volume of programming in association with Norça. Biokinetics regularly appear as guests on NSM programs, and there are a few Norça who serve on the production crews of NSM Nature shows. This resource allows the folks at NSM to get footage that would be far too dangerous for a neutral journalist to capture. Norça gets more love from the press while improving the environmental literacy of viewers.

# ENEMIES

The Norça see all of humanity as their charge. As a result, any enemy of humanity is an enemy of the Norça. Having said that, some enemies are direr than others.

## ABERRANTS

The Norça consider Aberrants, sub-aberrant mutants, and those who worship them to be one of the greatest threats humanity has ever faced. In the early years of the Norça, del Fuego's disdain for Aberrants was palpable. His rage toward the Aberrants rivaled Solveig Larssen's, and he was always a loud advocate of swift and brutal solutions to Aberrant problems. The years have softened del Fuego a bit on the issue. This is largely due to insight he has gleaned from the relationship he has developed with S.K. Bhurano.

Through conversations with the quantakinetic proxy, along with the recent discovery of the Nova Age colony world Eden, del Fuego has come to understand that Aberrants need not suffer the doom of madness and malignancy. The Corruption is manageable, containable, and avoidable, according to Bhurano's theories. If uncorrupted novas could come into the fold to work alongside the psi orders to humanity's benefit, it would represent a leap forward in all areas of science, health, and exploration. Not to mention the security such incredible powerhouses could provide against other threats.

## THE CHROMATICS

The Chromatics present a deep, foreboding mystery to the Norça. All the intelligence gathered to this point about these bizarre aliens is confusing, contradictory, and poses more questions than it answers. Unraveling the numerous mysteries surrounding the Chromatics is a high priority for the Norça. Of particular interest is the nature and origin of the Chromatic biotech, which vexes the few technicians who have had the opportunity to study it. A cell of Caçadores de Segredos recently relocated to Karroo Mining Colony in the hopes of solving the riddle of the alien technology.

## THE DOYEN

Del Fuego never fully trusted the Doyen. Even in their initial meetings, the proxy was too wise and world wary to trust alien beings offering great power. However, he never suspected the extent of the threat the Doyen pose to humanity. The revelation that a Doyen had seized control of S.K. Bhurano and steered the psi orders into a bloody conflict came as a shock to del Fuego. He is still wrestling with the fact the same beings who enabled humanity to access psionics and construct biotech would also manipulate their protégés

into bloody conflict with one another. However, he does take comfort in the knowledge the Chitra Bhanu have discovered techniques that can harm or even kill these mysterious foes. Of course, most of the Norça remain ignorant of the Doyen threat. Someday soon, that will need to change. Del Fuego knows conflict with the Doyen is inevitable but hopes to have the Norça ready when the time comes.

# NOTABLE NORÇA

Norça prides itself on acquiring the best and brightest of humanity, as only the best and brightest are worthy of joining the family. Even within such a collection of skilled and talented people, some individuals stand out as exceptionally exceptional. Whether they have pursued excellence their whole lives, or simply found it when circumstances called on them to do so, these Norça are among the best the order has to offer.

## GIUSEPPE DEL FUEGO

Giuseppe del Fuego is deeply passionate about environmentalism and protecting both humanity and the Earth, but what he cares most about is his people, or as he puts it, his família, which includes all members of psi order Norça, and not just the psions or biokinetics. While outsiders know his image of a fierce and uncompromising man of mystery, he's also someone that enjoys nothing more than sharing drinks and conversation with the other members of Norça. In addition to meeting with every Norça member during their recruitment, he regularly socializes with other members of this psi order. When the safety of humanity or the nations of Sudamérica are concerned, he's all business, but more than the other proxies, the pai de Norça understands the necessity of taking time off, of blowing off steam, and tending to social bonds. When time permits he's always happy to celebrate both the personal and professional triumphs of his people and also to comfort them and share grief or disappointment over their losses.

Also, his closest confidants, with who he's shared knowledge of the Doyen threat, have noticed proxy del Fuego has been both increasingly worried about the Doyen and also concerned that his keeping the truth secret about these dangerous aliens may end up endangering some of his people. Among his many other duties, proxy del Fuego is currently working with proxies Atwan and Larssen to help plan the invasion of Chrome Prime. Several of the people who know him best expect him to make an order-wide announcement about the Doyen after the invasion.

## MAJOR MARTÍN VARGAS

Major Vargas is a believer. He believes in the righteousness of the Norça cause. He seeks to do his part to serve the greater good by carrying out his duties as ordered. However, his assignment on Averiguas has strained his ideals as he must remain neutral and patient in a rapidly deteriorating powder keg of conflict. The rift between the Brazilian Governor and the Workers' Council threatens to erupt into violence as Governor Cristobal attempts to assert Brazilian rule over the whole of the colony. Vargas has seen the Workers' council go to war once and has no interest in revisiting the brutality and bloodshed of years past. Furthermore, many of the Norça on Averiguas fully, openly, and vocally support the Workers' Council's claim to sovereignty. Vargas has tried to rein in some of the more outspoken activists in the order, lest they give the Brazilian government the impression Norça has taken a side in this conflict.

Maintaining the appearance of impartiality is vital for the Norça on Averiguas. Choosing the side of the Workers' Council in any official capacity would be Norça thumbing its nose at Brazil. Siding with the government would betray the principles of the Norça but would also enrage many of the Norça who have been living on Averiguas, working alongside the laborers since the Upeo exodus. Vargas dreads having to order the Norça to become involved and has advised del Fuego that Norça should pull their holdings from the extrasolar colony and move back to Earth. He is especially concerned about the possibility of Brazil, the Workers' Council, or meddling mediators from Æon discovering the research Norça conducts at Site No. 24.

In spite (or perhaps because) of these doubts Major Vargas is a good man. He enjoys universal respect across Averiguas. The Workers' Council know him to be fair, just, and kind. The Brazilian government admires his adherence to protocol, his efficiency, and the respect he and his deployment have shown Governor Cristobal. If the truth of Site No. 24 were to become public knowledge, this admiration and respect would surely fade.

# THOSE WHO LEFT

Norça boasts one of the lowest resignation rates among the psi orders. The Norça considers all members, neutral or psion, to be family and treats them accordingly. As such, Norça rarely succumb to the lure of external temptation. Few job offers can match the camaraderie, community, and compensation Norça provides. When a member of the order displays signs of dissatisfaction, their cellmates usually work to offer comfort and resolve the issue. If the immediate family can't find a resolution, they reach out to senior members of the order to intercede. More often than not, this ends with the Norça remaining with the order as the elder provides every comfort within their power to soothe the relationship. On occasion, Pai de Norça becomes directly involved in the conflict resolution, the loving father working to smooth things over with a potentially wayward child.

Despite extensive retention efforts, some people do leave the Norça. Once it becomes clear there is no path to preserving a person's place within the family, Norça works to ensure the exiting member is set up for success in their new life. The departing member receives the honor of a farewell celebration during which the tio or tia may offer a final plea to reconsider, though by this point doing so is more of a formality than anything else. At the gathering's conclusion, the now-former Norça's tia or tio gives them a final reminder of the sanctity of family secrets before releasing them into the world.

Given the effort expended to keep their people happy, it takes an especially strong and determined person to walk away from the Norça. Those who do often achieve greatness in their own right.

## SEBASTIAN MICHAELS

Sebastian came to the Norça a broken man. Alejandra Gomez, an undercover biokinetic working with Trumerican resistance fighters in Texas discovered Michaels in 2114. A skirmish with FSM soldiers left Sebastian's cell dead and him mortally wounded. Alejandra was able to stabilize Michaels and spirit him away before the FSM found him, but she was certain the freedom fighter would die from his wounds. Much to her surprise, Sebastian survived. Seeing something special in him, Alejandra took him to associates in Mexico City. She was certain that Sebastian was a latent psion, but latency tests showed no psi potential. Regardless, Sebastian's heroism, resolve, and spirit were sufficient to convince Alejandra the young man belonged with Norça.

Sebastian had yet to fully recover from his injuries when Alejandra began the recruitment pitch. She explained that the Norça were sympathetic to anti-FSA resistance groups. If Sebastian would join the family, he would have resources beyond his wildest dreams to take the fight to the FSA in a meaningful way. Alejandra also spoke of heroism, the duty to protect humanity, and the import of preserving the Earth, but those points barely registered with Sebastian. The chance to do some damage to the FSA was all the wounded warrior needed. Sebastian eagerly agreed to join the family.

Sebastian traveled to Brasilia where he underwent Reconstruir. In addition to a new face, Sebastian received several biomodifications to aid in guerrilla warfare. Retractable claws, amphibious adaptation, and redundant organs were but a portion of the upgrades he received. Once healed from Reconstruir, Sebastian began training with Guerreiros do Alvorecer. His combat experience, biomodifications, and remarkable good luck served him well. Michaels earned the rank of Sargento Primero before celebrating his first year with the Norça. His leadership skills and combat prowess earned him assignment to one of the most dangerous posts in Sudamérica: the Venezuela Blight Research Station.

At first Sebastian was happy for the assignment. He looked forward to testing his new abilities against sub-aberrant mutants and he thought dodging the Blight Zone's security would be good practice for evading FSM patrols. However, weeks dragged on to months, and months to years. As time passed, Sebastian grew increasingly uncomfortable in the Blight Zone. He wanted reassignment to the FSA, so he could use his skills for the Trumerican movement, as Alejandra had promised. Upon denial of his third request for transfer, Sebastian left the Norça in anger. Returning home to Texas, he quickly found a new cell of Trumerican resistance fighters to join. Now he uses his combat training and biomods to fight American oppression.

Sebastian is a Talent with several biomodifications. He is a passionate believer in the Trumerican cause and is willing to kill or die for the belief that the FSA should restore the U.S. Constitution as the law of the land. While the Norça does not oppose the Trumerican cause, nor Sebastian's commitment to it,

they do keep tabs on the former Sargento Primero. Sebastian learned many sensitive secrets while stationed in Venezuela, and the Norça intend to ensure he keeps them. For his part, Sebastian does not give a damn about Pai de Norça's intrigues, the drama between the psi orders, or the secrets of the Chitra Bhanu. He is a single-minded man, focused utterly on the Trumerican movement.

# WEAVING NORÇA STORIES

The Norça, perhaps more than any other psi order, seeks diversity in membership. Cells from every division often include not only biokinetics, but psions of other aptitudes, neutrals, and Talents. Because Norça courts this diversity, virtually any character type can find a home in a Norça campaign. Due to a broad distribution of interests, Norça characters can become embroiled in just about any **Trinity Continuum: Æon** tale.

## NORÇA BY ALLIANCE

The Norça has friends in organizations throughout settled space. Maintaining those friendships often entails Norça providing support and assistance to their allies. This can be a great gateway for involving the Norça in situations that might not otherwise appear on their radar. The Norça may have little direct involvement in diplomatic relations on Qinshui, for example. If an ally within the Æon Trinity, the Ministry, or even the Qin calls on a favor, the Norça are happy to become involved. Much of the influence the Norça enjoys is the result of favors done for friendly organizations.

Many of Norça's alliances are secret. Some, such as the alliance with the Chitra Bhanu or the connection between Norça and the Medellín Cartel, are unknown even to most members of the psi order. In a campaign focused on these secret alliances, the player characters must forward and preserve the goals of their allies while keeping the alliance (and in the case of the Chibs, the very existence of those allies) concealed. A campaign featuring the party tracking down missing quantakinetics, seeking new latent quantakinetics, or expanding the operations of the Medellín Cartel fits within this category.

## NORÇA BY DIVISION

One of the easiest ways for a Storyguide to craft a Norça narrative is to have the characters belong to the same division. Each Norça division provides a clear area of influence and set of directives that make it easy for the Storyguide to determine the tone of the campaign. A story centered around a cell of Hermanos Guardianes features search and rescue missions, disaster relief work, and conflicts of the psions versus nature. Such a campaign may focus on hope and recovery as themes or may examine fear and urgency in the face of apparent doom. A campaign featuring a cell of Centinelas de la Noche conducting espionage missions in foreign lands produces a drastically different feel as intrigue and legerdemain replace dashing heroics and physical peril.

## NORÇA BY LOCATION

Another factor that greatly impacts the flavor of a Norça campaign is the setting. Norça has interests throughout settled space, with each location having unique concerns and opportunities. A Norça campaign set in Sudamérica should present a drastically different tone than one set on Averiguas. This is another story element the group must consider as they choose which aspects of Norça identity they wish to explore. Sudaméricans see the Norça as heroes of the people and treat known Norça accordingly. In the FSA, most people see the Norça as interlopers, spies, and potentially insurgents. The Storyguide and players can amplify or subvert these views through the events of the campaign, but they provide a crucial starting point for establishing the status quo as the story begins.

## NORÇA BY MISSION

One of the benefits to the cellular structure of the Norça is the ability to easily combine and reconfigure individual cells for a particular task. A Norça campaign can focus on the formation and adventures of one such cell or follow a few select characters through a series of mission-based cells. This work great for troupes with players who cannot make every session, or for groups who want to cycle different characters in and out throughout the course of the campaign. A single mission may last only a session, or may involve a multi-episode arc, but the team assembled for the mission is hand-picked by the Cantores for maximum operational efficiency.

A mission-focused campaign might involve several Norça members going deep undercover with a different

group to gather intelligence, sabotage the target's goals, or offer clandestine aid to a Norça interest. This can create a complex and layered story with multiple tones at work. The primary flavor of the campaign becomes the cover story. Norça posing as Æon inspectors to gain access to a research lab, insinuating themselves into an asteroid belt pirate crew, or infiltrating the FSM each present a very different feel. Much like the biokinetics themselves, there is more going on beneath the surface of each of these options, as the Norça's true mission provides an underlying counterbalance to the primary plot. The Storyguide can wield shifts between assumed

identities and true Norça concerns to lend narrative weight to the drama inherent in undercover work.

### Norça by Proxy

Each of the proxies plays a direct role in the stories of their order. That role often manifests as distant communication distributed through an order's bureaucracy. Alex Cassel sends an email to the Lumen Chief Operating Officer, who passes it through management to an employee. Minister Rebecca Bue Li sends communiques to the top officials of the Ministry who disburse the message, as needed, to the various agents under her authority. General Solveig Larssen issues orders and her colonels, lieutenants, and sergeants carry out those orders or pass them along to subordinates to address.

While Pai de Norça uses the Cantores extensively to manage tasks and dispense assignments, he is not above rolling up his sleeves and becoming involved himself. While most of the proxies are very active and few shy away from taking a hands-on role in the business of their order, Giuseppe del Fuego is among the likeliest to take a personal interest in the activities of a field team. This doesn't mean he should just show up and lend aid to a party in the field, though extremely dire and delicate missions may inspire him to do so. More likely he meets with adventurers in secret for progress reports and to entertain support requests. Thanks to del Fuego's *clone* power (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, p. 216), he has the ability to be in more than one place at a time, and can become embroiled in several operations simultaneously without ever needing to take his concentration from the broader responsibilities of running the psi order.

## Norça Disavowed

The Norça are involved in all manner of illegal activity. While the biokinetic order takes care of its own, there are some missions they understand will end in the Norça disavowing the operative, should their activities or identities become compromised. Usually, this means if a Norça blows their cover, but they manage to escape, they can simply craft a new appearance and identity, making it safe to return to the fold. However, those who fail to avoid capture are not so lucky. They may face imprisonment. They may also undergo forced service by a hostile power. It is not unheard of for some countries to use prisoners of exceptional skill as expendable assets as part of their sentencing.

A disavowed campaign might begin as an undercover operation. An event compromises the troupe's cover and they must escape to safety. Their pursuers reveal their identities and the Norça publicly disavows them, though they know if they can make it to safety, they can return to the order with a new face.

If caught, they are incarcerated. This could lead to a series of stories set in a prison where the main focus becomes escape. Perhaps their sentence includes assignment to a squad that serves on suicide missions based out of the facility. All these stories are valid for Norça campaigns.

## NORÇA IN THE MEDIA

Norça has several connections to New Sudamérican Media. Several members of the order work at NSM as consultants, programming directors, showrunners, and even on-air talent. Programs aired on NSM Nature are especially attractive to the Norça seeking media employment. A campaign could focus on the troupe as the crew of a Nature show, traveling the Amazon in an NSM Nature Skimmer, documenting and discovering new species, saving imperiled animals, and fighting off Aberrant threats who endanger the rainforest. The party, or at least those of them who appear on camera, gain a level of celebrity. Visiting the smallest village can lead to encounters with adoring fans. For those seeking to avoid the limelight, the Norça penchant for disguise can be an amazing asset.

Other campaign concepts tying Norça to NSM could include the group acting as reporters. This type of campaign explores the role of the press in the world of 2123. Adventure is found as the party chases down leads, engages in investigations, and unearths revelations about the news of the day. Sometimes what they find might prove embarrassing to psions in general, or even Norça in particular. The reporters must then resolve the conflict between their commitment to journalism and their loyalty to Norça. Do they kill the story for the good of the order, or do they press forward for the good of the people?

# NEW PATHS & EDGES

The Norça recruit the best of the best and provide their people with a network of resources, connections, and technologies. These paths and edges demonstrate but a portion of the strength of the Nova Força Nacional.

## AUGMENT (ORIGIN)

Your character may be a Sudamérican native, someone who traveled to Sudamérica from a more restrictive region to receive modifications, or perhaps they were born and raised somewhere where modifications are commonplace such as Oceania, Mars, or a microgravity colony. You may even be from Nippon, where cyberware is an accessible technology. Wherever you hail from, you have undergone extensive genetic, noetic, or cybernetic enhancement.

### PATH CONCEPTS

Brazilian transhumanist, Oceanian aqua, Nippon cyberware enthusiast, Superior

**Example Connections:** Genetic engineer, Cyberware technician, Norça surgical team, Colony foreman, Æon Project Ceto operative, Psi Nippon activist

**Skills:** Culture, Empathy, Medicine, Technology

**Edges:** Amphibious Conversion, Aquatic Conversion, Computer Enhancement, Cyberware Access (• to ••), Increased Tolerance, Low-Gravity Adaptation, Wealth (• To ••)

## INTELLIGENCER (ROLE)

Your character is trained in the arts of spycraft and espionage. You study the culture and mores of your target, be they a corporation, a nation, or a psi order, to better insinuate yourself into their ranks. You are not only a skilled profiler, but also a trained performer who knows how to maintain cover for an extended period. You are well versed in clandestine communication, counterespionage, and an array of skills that make you the perfect spy.

### PATH CONCEPTS

Norça spy, Æon Trinity Section Minerva operative, *Nueva Revolución de México* saboteur, Metacorporate spy

**Example Connections:** Æon Council liaison, corporate informant, government functionary, intelligence operative, resistance fighter, Norça cell leader

**Skills:** Culture, Integrity, Larceny, Persuasion

**Edges:** Alternate Identity, Always Prepared, Covert (• To •••), Dual Citizenship, Iron Will, Tough Cookie, Safe House, Skilled Liar

### SPECIAL EDGE: AUXILIARY TEMPLATE (••••)

**Prerequisite:** Norça, biokinesis aptitude

Through the process of Reconstruir, you have received multiple alterations to your noetic

template. While this process is relatively common in Sudamérica, you have taken it a step further. Working in tandem with a Norça vitakinetic, you have generated an auxiliary template that contains a completely different set of enhancements and modifications. This may simply be an unaltered version of your original noetic template, a completely different template designed to offer a second set of specialized modifications, or an infallible duplication of a target's identity. You can apply anything achieved through the Reconstruir process to your auxiliary template.

Upon establishing the auxiliary template, you may switch between your primary template and your auxiliary template instantly with the expenditure of a psi point. While one of the noetic templates is active, the other lies dormant and undetectable. You may bring the unused template close enough to the surface for detection and alteration with the expenditure of a psi point. This psi point must remain committed while the auxiliary template remains accessible.

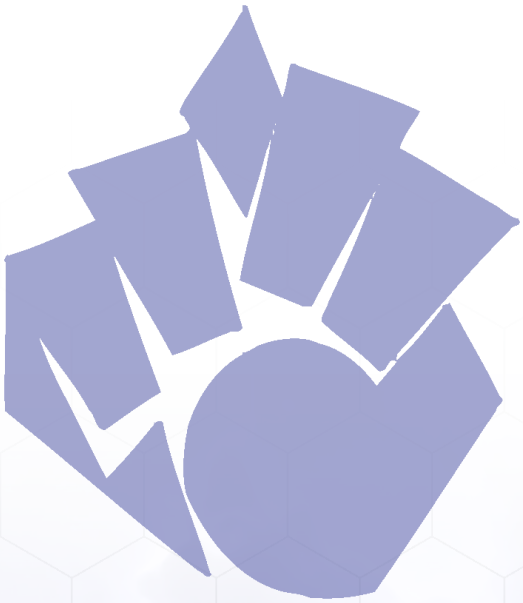
You use the active template when subjected to vitakinesis powers. This does have the effect of allowing you to overcome damage and conditions inflicted on you using Algesis, provided you are alive and conscious enough to spend the psi to switch to your undamaged template. If you do, you must use the biokinesis power *Perfection* (•••••) or *Survive* (•••••) or benefit from the vitakinesis power *Restore Template* (••••), targeting the damaged template before assuming it again.

## SPECIAL EDGE: QUANTAKINETIC MENTOR (••)

**Prerequisite:** Norça, quantakinesis auxiliary mode

Your character is among the select few who are aware of the ongoing existence of the Chitra Bhanu and their involvement with the Venezuela Blight Research Station. You have shown basic competence with quantakinesis and earned enough trust of one of the quantakinetics to establish a mentor/mentee relationship. Due to this relationship, you have training in some of the most advanced and comprehensive theories and practices of noetic science. Whenever you make a roll to understand or apply noetic theory to a situation (often involving Science or Technology, but on rare occasions, the Storyguide may allow this to apply to psi rolls) you benefit from a +2-enhancement due to your noetic scholarship and training.

Furthermore, your familiarity with the techniques and practices of the Chitra Bhanu has granted you an understanding of basic quantakinesis unmatched outside the quantakinetic order. You may purchase the Enhanced Psi Cloak special edge (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, p. 371), ignoring the usual prerequisites.



CHAPTER SEVEN

# ORGOTEK

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."
— President Barack Obama

While every psi order is a household name, Orgotek is the only name found in virtually every household in settled space. Orgotek is among the leading producers of many common technologies, including minicomps (and the SI that accompany them), household appliances, vehicles, and cosmetics. Like all corporations, Orgotek is always seeking new and inventive ways to turn a profit. Unlike most corporations, they also have the resources to support research and development in virtually every field. Chances are good that if a consumer market exists, Orgotek has a presence in that market.

Orgotek Prexy Alex Cassel has little time for the romantic notions of Prometheus, but he understands the power of good branding. Among close friends, Cassel sometimes claims Matthieu Zweidler wanted to call the Prometheus Chambers 'Latent Potential Noetic Gene Therapy Biomechanical Activation Pods' until Alex intervened. Alex also recognizes the symmetry between the legends of Prometheus and the knowledge, power, and artifice potential gifted to humanity by the proxy's benefactors, and incorporates subtle imagery reinforcing the concepts into Orgotek's designs and branding. Cassel worked hard in the psi orders' early years to ensure everyone knew of the Prometheus Effect and Chambers and wanted their chance to join the growing ranks of psions.

# OVERVIEW MEMORANDUM

Beyond the consumer level, Orgotek generates massive profits through specialized contract work. International government contracts in defense, infrastructure, and OpNet development represent a massive portion of the bottom line at the Big O. While each psi order is capable of producing their own biotechnology, many turn to Orgotek for basics in this field as well, freeing their own internal R&D for specialized biotechnology related to their own expertise and aptitudes. One of the largest contracts Orgotek maintains is their general consultancy arrangement with the Æon Trinity, which can be tapped for a nearly endless cash stream.

In addition to being one of the largest metacorporations in settled space, Orgotek is home to one of the largest psi orders. Electrokinesis is a common latency, and the ubiquity of biotech means every order needs electrokinetics to maintain their technology. As a result, Orgotek can take full advantage of a robust exchange program with the other orders, ensuring Psi Orgotek can draw on nearly the full range of humanity's psionic potential without needing to reach beyond internal personnel.

While Psi Orgotek operates in tandem with Orgotek, sharing resources and personnel, the order is a semi-separate entity with a different agenda. Both organizations serve Alex Cassel's ultimate goals of the protection and betterment of humanity, albeit from different angles of approach. Orgotek the metacorporation works to provide technology to

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

No one says the name 'Psi Orgotek'. It appears on some Orgotek internal structure diagrams and memos — mostly relating to the prexy moving staff around, yet again. Orgotek employees who join the psi order (all psions, most neutrals) gain a discrete Greek letter psi to their identification badges to show their membership "in the club," but to outsiders, the metacorporation and psi order are simply the same.

This chapter uses "Psi Orgotek" more frequently than it ever occurs to ensure clarity in the differences between the psi order and the business. See **Mission Statements**, for more information on the workings of the Orgotek metacorporation.

improve quality of life, but market penetration and profit are major drivers for its efforts. Psi Orgotek places nowhere near the same degree of import on making money, focusing on keeping the cosmos safe for humanity while making humanity safe for psions. Prexy Cassel has seen firsthand how easily the psi orders could fall to corruption and has no intention of letting that fate befall Orgotek.

# MEMBERSHIP AND PRIVILEGES

The psi order presents an anomaly in Orgotek's corporate structure. Many employees view it like a social club — join up, meet people, have a few drinks and laughs, and build networks to use throughout their careers. This is true to an extent, but by joining Psi Orgotek individuals agree to direction and deployment at the needs of the proxy, exempted from the general stipulations and clauses in their employment contracts via other specific stipulations and clauses.

Psi Orgotek's ranks include employees of each Orgotek division, though employment with Orgotek is not a requirement for being a member of the psi order. From an operational perspective Psi Orgotek takes precedence over any other job duties the membership may hold in Orgotek's other divisions. Psi Orgotek can claim personnel for projects at the sole discretion of the prexy, though he does routinely seek feedback from the board before moving people off time-sensitive or large scope projects, whenever possible.

Psi order members not employed by Orgotek still receive a stipend from their membership. This stipend combined with room and board provided while on assignment assures that members of the order are comfortable enough to perform to Cassel's expectations without having to worry about basic needs or comfort. Many Psi Orgotek members who are not employees of the corporation also fill their spare time with freelance work, be it from other psi orders, the Æon Trinity, various governments, or even other corporations. Cassel encourages the practice, as it puts psions he trusts in position to observe people he does not. Non-disclosure agreements supported by Orgotek's massive legal team provide a layer of security against Orgotek freelancers spilling company secrets to a competitor. To the prexy's mind, the NDAs are merely a formality to keep the legal department off his back. If Cassel develops doubts in the trustworthiness of a member of Orgotek, he terminates their position rather than rely on bureaucracy as a security blanket.

### TALENTS AND PSI ORGOTEK

Alex Cassel's ability to draw from Orgotek personnel for Psi Orgotek operations covers more than psions. The ability to requisition support staff for Psi Orgotek is included in the Orgotek Articles of Incorporation and enjoys the same autonomy from Board approval as the assignment of psion personnel. As Orgotek's endeavors often demand exceptional skill, Talents on staff are often mobilized when needed by the prexy. This is not an understanding of what Talents are so much as a side effect of exceptional performance from these individuals within the company. Cassel always seeks the best fit for Psi Orgotek assignment, which often leads to a Talent, provided one is available.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Managing personnel for Psi Orgotek is a daunting task, one the prexy retains sole responsibility for and ultimate control over. This is not a function of pride, as some outsiders might suggest, but a reflection of the delicate nature of Psi Orgotek's work and an overwhelming need on the part of the prexy to maximize efficiency. No one else can make the final call on what the psi order needs, as no one else has the same awareness of Orgotek's current operations. However, just because the prexy has final say on who he moves or assigns to a task, does not mean he works without aid.

Orgotek's basic organization, scheduling, and resource allocation is tracked by Alex Cassel's personal SI, a homebrewed agent named "Lex." Alex relies on Lex to handle operational minutiae, freeing himself to focus on the bigger picture. Lex can process and track all Orgotek operations and compiles and compares personnel files to generate models and

recommendations designed to optimize operations. For a lesser psion, Lex would present a severe security risk, however Cassel is entirely too paranoid and far too powerful to permit such sensitive data to remain vulnerable. Lex's operational code, as well as the data it accesses, is stored via the Subquantum Computing power (**Trinity Continuum: Æon** p. 232) making it effectively inaccessible to all but himself.

Once Lex has provided recommendations, Alex reviews the data, consults each employee's file for potential red flags and sticking points. If additional concerns come up, Cassel either chooses an alternate assignment, confers with the board members who would be impacted by the personnel shift, or draws on Ellayne's organizational expertise to assist in ironing out any wrinkles. Alex still maintains sole control of and priority access to Psi Orgotek personnel, but that doesn't stop him from drawing on the input and aid of the board as needed.

## HOME BASE: THE WEI ARCOLOGY

For better or worse, the FSA is home to Orgotek. The WEI Arcology in New New York houses the central Psi Orgotek facility, in addition to serving as Orgotek's corporate headquarters. From street level, the psi order's HQ appears to be an unassuming five-story office building. Comprised of biotech walls, windows, and floors on a hardtech plasteel framework, the above-ground architecture is a living example of Structural Expressionism. The biotech nature of the building allows for electrokinetics to shift the structure as needed through psionics. While there are permanent flights of stairs, elevator shafts, and floor segments, a skilled electrokinetic (with any Mode at ••• or higher) can summon furniture, extend or retract sections of flooring, and craft new paths between floors with an expenditure of a single Psi point. The existing biotech structure grows, shifts, and shrinks at the electrokinetic's command. This allows Orgotek members to reconfigure the space within the building to suit their needs. Conference tables, private offices, stairways, and lounges can all be crafted at a moment's notice.

Two elevators, in the northwest and southeast corners, lead to the underground portion of the headquarters. This massive upper-basement facility takes up nine square kilometers beneath the surface of Staten Island and is built on the skeleton of the Fresh Kills landfill, rehabilitated under Nova Age environmental programs, and whose lingering traces of nova technology are of great interest to Orgotek. In addition to private living quarters sufficient to house each of the psi order's roughly 15,000 psions and their families, the first sub-basement holds recreational facilities, three gymnasiums, three Olympic-regulation swimming pools, a trideo theater and an amphitheater stage. A hangar with a retractable roof and attached underground garage occupies one square kilometer behind the office space, providing access for hovercraft, VTOL, hovercycles, and other private craft.

The lower sub-basement is the laboratory floor. Divided almost evenly between R&D labs and hydroponic farmland, this section is where technicians design and grow many of the non-commercial Orgotek bioapps. The laboratory facilities serve as training grounds for new electrokinetics, as well as design spaces and prototype manufacturing for a diverse menu of biotech and hardtech innovations. Ventilation systems pump air through the farmland garden to the rest of the underground complex, cleansing and oxygenating otherwise stale air. The garden is affectionately known as Freshkills Park among residents, and many teks picnic there for recreation.

The Electrokinesis Prometheus Chamber sits in the third sub-basement, deep beneath the arcology. It is accessible only via a single elevator shaft, accessed from sub-basement two near the main entrance to Freshkills Park. Security is a major concern for Orgotek and has become even more so in the wake of the Chitra Bhanu purge. Though utterly convinced of the necessity to act, Cassel saw the bloody result of inter-order conflict and took additional measures to ensure the electrokinetics could survive even a direct assault from the other psi orders. Aside from cutting-edge systems in every sub-basement, operated by highly talented psions, Alex has created a customized set of jump rings that allow him to move the Prometheus Chamber to a secret lunar facility in the event of a full breach. Due to his mastery of electrokinesis, Cassel can activate the jump rings remotely at the speed of thought from anywhere within a 10,000 km range of either ring. Even if the Orgotek headquarters fell, the electrokinetic order could live on.

# ORGOTEK INITIATIVES

Orgotek is everywhere humanity can be found, pushing the boundaries of human capability and surpassing the limits humanity faces in every field. On Earth, Orgotek's base of operations is within the FSA, an environment that can be generously described as hostile to psions. In near-earth space, Orgotek works to master marvels of engineering in microgravity, expands the capacity of biotechnology beyond

what can be achieved on the ground, and labors to perfect colonization and terraforming techniques. Near Luna, the Leviathan program has cemented Orgotek as a leader in space exploration while cementing ties between the Big O and humanity's closest allies among the stars, the Qin. On extrasolar colonies, Orgotek leads the counteroffensive against the Chromatic threat while providing technical and material support to other colonies still reeling from extended lack of contact with Earth. Many obstacles still exist between humanity's current place in the universe and Prexy Cassel's vision of a safe, healthy, and prosperous humanity whose reach spans the stars. Fortunately, Alex has a plan. Several, in fact.

## Earth and Near Space

While Orgotek strives to take humanity to the stars, Earth is home. The safety, security, and prosperity of the people of the Sol system are Orgotek's top priority. The bulk of Orgotek's work is accomplished here.

### FSA

Orgotek maintains its presence in the FSA, in part, due to the company's desire to save America from fascism while combating anti-psion sentiment. Orgotek devotes significant resources to improving life for Americans through education, technology, and political action.

#### KIM: Knowledge in Motion

A response to the abysmal education offered by the FSA, Orgotek initiated the Knowledge in Motion program in 2116. Participants in the KIM program travel circuitous routes throughout the 17 Districts of the FSA in one of the modified APC Orgotek Knowbuses. Stopping throughout the district, a Knowbus offers free courses broken down in one, two, or four-week segments, and runs 'field trips' encouraging students to learn about local or nearby places of significance. In addition to free education, Knowbuses offer free latency testing to any student who requests it.

The FSA would love to shut down the KIM program, but due to the popularity of the initiative, they don't want to risk public backlash. In addition to its popularity among the second-class citizens who gain the most benefit from KIM, the initiative is incredibly popular among first-class citizenry. Praising KIM provides a means for the wealthy to look and feel empathetic toward the lower class without having to do any actual work or spend any actual money. Thus, some of the most vocal supporters of KIM come from among the first-class.

#### Political Initiatives

Alex Cassel fosters a politically active environment among the psions of Orgotek. The FSA is an

oppressive, hostile environment for not only psions, but for everyone who cannot afford first-class citizenship. Despite his accumulation of wealth, power, and influence, the prexy genuinely wants to build a better future for all of humanity be they rich, poor, neutral, or psion. This desire is manifested in every part of the Orgotek corporate structure. The choice to build the central Orgotek HQ on Staten Island, once a toxic, crime-riddled slum, is a physical manifestation of Cassel's vision. Maintaining the company's presence in the FSA honors the same principle. Cassel knows there is little chance to affect FSA policy from the outside. Despite the ample problems in the FSA, the prexy sees great potential in the people of North America, and he wants to do everything he can to empower them.

The reality of FSA politics requires a massive investment of funds to fuel progress. Each voter must pay to maintain their voting rights, and Orgotek ensures every psion and neutral in their employ can preserve their citizenship while living comfortably. While Cassel does not dictate how Orgotek employees vote, he spends considerable effort presenting the Orgotek view on candidates and issues. This effort is no stronger than where Psi Orgotek is concerned. Cassel is not naïve enough to expect every psion in the order to grasp the gravity of the need for political activity in the FSA. As such, he expends a small fortune ensuring members of Orgotek are educated on the issues of the day, and the pros and cons of each voting position's impact on neutrals, psions, and Orgotek operations.

## INDIA

Orgotek maintains a vast corporate complex in Mumbai. While this facility is mostly WEI personnel managing relationships with other corporations in the region, it is home to Project Iscariot, an operation carrying more than the usual amount of the prexy's personal interest.

After the Chitra Bhanu purge, the government of Mumbai refused to allow any of the psi orders access to the Chibs' headquarters. The government was furious that the psi orders entered their sovereign territory and effectively executed citizens of the Commonwealth without any consultation with the government. Of all the orders, only the Æsculapian Order and Orgotek were able to maintain operations in Mumbai in the months that followed. Both orders had to acquiesce to restrictions to remain active in the area. The rexs were largely unrestricted apart from a mandate requiring all members of the Æsculapian Order remain a minimum of one kilometer from the Chitra Bhanu property. Orgotek was asked to remove all psionic members of the corporation from Mumbai, leaving only neutral company personnel on site.

Though Orgotek was unable to access the site to investigate, Cassel had access to ample data from the meltdown between the orders and the Chitra Bhanu. If interactions turned violent, Cassel knew he would need to know why. He had the foresight to enable every minicomp in the headquarters to record video and audio immediately before the fight broke out. Cassel channeled the data into the city itself on a subquantum level. After the initial moratorium on psion activity in Mumbai relaxed, Cassel was able to visit the city and collect the images and sounds of the conflict. Quantakinetic manipulations prevented every device from responding to Cassel's electrokinetic commands, and subquantum interference corrupted portions of the data, but Cassel was able to salvage a surprisingly complete record of the fateful event.

Project Iscariot focuses on cleaning the data and sifting through it for clues about what went wrong, where certain orders came from, and the fate of those quantakinetics who were not accounted for in the remains found on site. Most personnel on Project Iscariot are neutral analysts and investigators who scour the footage second by second in search of useful, actionable information. Their findings are compiled into a master file referred to as the Gospel.

At this point the Gospel is almost complete. Once the analysts finalize their findings, Cassel has ordered a trideo reconstruction of the scene based on the information in the Gospel. This will allow an observer (such as Cassel) to walk through the purge in a real-time simulation which can be sped up, slowed down, paused, restarted, and re-framed to provide different points of view on the action. Cassel hopes the ability to reconstruct the battle will provide some new insight into the final moments of the Chitra Bhanu.

## LUNA

Orgotek maintains numerous facilities on and around Luna. Microgravity provides several benefits for bioware engineering, including the ability to build the massive Leviathan jump ships, which would be nearly impossible to construct on Earth. While these Lunar and orbital installations are staffed with neutral personnel, Psi Orgotek maintains a strong presence in near Earth space.

## OLYMPUS

Upside, in the Bire Lubuto neighborhood, Orgosoft Farms operates a maintenance facility to keep the biotech structures strong, healthy, and beautiful. WEI keeps a multi-story office in the Mezzanine, acting as Orgotek's brain for Lunar operations. Downside is home to a new KIM Lunar expansion, bringing the FSA based program to the underprivileged of Luna. While each of these initiatives operates under the Orgotek corporate umbrella, all of them provide operational space dedicated to Psi Orgotek. This allows Orgotek flexibility to move through all strata of society in Olympus.

## THOMPSON CRATER

The Thompson Crater Spaceport serves as the dry dock for the Leviathan program. Any construction, maintenance, and upgrades that cannot be performed while the massive jump ships are in space is achieved here. While the Æon Trinity, the Qin, and the other psi orders are all actively involved in the operation and security of Thompson Crater, Psi Orgotek makes all administrative decisions and is solely responsible for the maintenance schedule.

The Aberrant attack on Mazat Station in 2119 nearly took the legs out from under the Leviathan program. If not for the foresight of Orgotek to construct a secret backup facility, the Leviathan program would have been set back by years rather than months. Revealing Thompson crater kept the project alive but left the Leviathan project without a backup plan. Time and available resources kept Orgotek from creating another auxiliary site until after the first jump ships launched.

# THE OUTER SOLAR SYSTEM

Orgotek maintains several operations beyond the asteroid belt. This far from Earth, security is a major concern. Aberrants, asteroid belt pirates, and the distance between human holdings all present major threats to operations beyond the belt.

## PROJECT PLAIN SITE

In 2122, Orgotek began construction on a strategic secondary Leviathan dock. Orbiting Jupiter's moon, Ganymede, the dock is currently referred to as Project Plain Site. In addition to state-of-the-art weaponry and security measures, Project Plain Site incorporates bleeding edge experimental biotech that cloaks against visual and electromagnetic detection.

## PROJECT PLAIN SITE AND THE BOUNTY

Catalina Herrera is loadmaster for Project Plain Site and a bright electrokinetic from the Tehuantepec District of the FSA. Unknown to the prexy, Catalina's brother, Martín Herrera, is a Mexican freedom fighter turned space pirate who is now skimming parts and technology from Project Plain Site. Catalina has been feeding shipping manifests to Martín since the launch of Project Plain Site. The Bounty recently hit their second shipment bound for the nascent space station, which has aroused Alex's suspicion. For the moment, Cassel believes the intelligence leak to be coming from a shipping partner, but once he has eliminated that possibility, it will not be long before he turns his investigation to the crew of Project Plain Site.

Catalina believes these stolen supplies are to fight for Mexican independence from the FSA. However, Martín has become disillusioned, now preferring to live free and make his (stolen) fortune. He sees his little sister's position at Orgotek as their ticket to retirement. If the whole thing costs her career, he figures, it is what she deserves for leaving him to rot in a war-torn slum.

Project Plain Site is capable of docking six Leviathans. Cassel would like to preprogram the psi coordinates of each docking bay into the Tesser of each Leviathan, so in case of a major emergency, the ship can jump back to space dock, even if space dock is under cloak. In theory, this would also allow the ships docked at Thompson Crater the ability to escape, should Aberrants try to repeat their Mazat Station attack at Thompson Crater. If the process can be developed, Cassel sees a great opportunity to build similar stations across settled space. While the technology to allow these jumps to occur remains beyond Orgotek's reach, research and development is hard at work trying to sort out the logistics.

# EXTRASOLAR ACTIVITY

Orgotek is wherever humanity is found. Orgotek was instrumental in the execution of the Leviathan jump ship program and no one is more qualified to serve on the engineering team of these ships than Orgotek psions. The prevalence of biotech use in the extrasolar colonies means the services and expertise

of the electrokinetics are in high demand across settled space. While psions of every order can perform routine maintenance on and development of biotechnology, no order is as capable of providing training, tools, and support for biotechnology as Orgotek. As a result, many outside the order view Orgotek as the mechanics of the stars. While this view is not inaccurate, it encompasses only a small portion of the work the psi order does in deep space.

### AVERIGUAS

Orgotek treads carefully concerning Averiguas. The Æon Trinity is engaged in active and sensitive negotiations between the Workers' Council and the Brazilian Governor. While Norça remains officially neutral, the presence of Norça members within both factions on Averiguas makes it clear to Orgotek that the biokinetic order's relationship with the colony is complex. As such, Orgotek cautiously measures all activity on Averiguas, performing assigned duties, lending aid to Æon Trinity operations, and taking copious notes on the interactions they witness.

### KARROO MINING COLONY

Home to the largest collection of Psi Orgotek members outside the solar system, Karroo Mining Colony is the epicenter of research into the alien Chromatics. While a contingent of Tekne personnel stay on Karoo to study puzzling hardtech artifacts discovered in the nebula, most Orgotek personnel on the station are from Lumen. Based in the recently constructed Chromatic Research Facility Two, Orgotek photokinetics work around the clock to understand and overcome the threat presented by the Chromatics. During Karroo's isolation from Earth, the mining colony managed to secure multiple samples of Chromatic technology and a few corpses. These assets have proven invaluable in the effort to understand the Chromatics. Where possible, Orgotek and the Æon Trinity advocate for the live capture of Chromatic personnel.

Several advances have been made in the short time that CRF-2 has been operational. Orgotek has designed a rudimentary translator, which assists in communication with the Chromatics. This has provided the researchers of CRF-2 with a wealth of interesting, if confusing intelligence on Chromatic society and culture. Perhaps the greatest progress Orgotek has made at CRF-2 has been in reverse-engineering Chromatic biotech.

A team of Orgotek researchers recently concluded that the common genetic code within Chromatic biotech can be traced to Earthly origin. The data indicated the Chromatics somehow had access to DNA sequences from plant and animal life of Earth and used this DNA as the basis for their technology. This team also concluded Chromatic biotech bears several uncanny resemblances to Orgotek design principles. Neither of these discoveries sit well with the research team, but for the moment, they have elected to keep their findings within Orgotek. The relevant data was collected, encrypted, and sent directly to the prexy for evaluation.

### ALEX CASSEL AND CHROMATIC TECHNOLOGY

Alex has suspected a link between Chromatic technology and Orgotek since seeing the first footage of a Chromatic attack. Research at CRF-2 has confirmed his suspicions while compounding his confusion and anger. With the verification that Chromatic biotech operates on Earth-based genetic sequencing, doubts about Chromatic access to human tech dissipated. CRF-2 analysis of a relatively intact Chromatic fighter gave Cassel his strongest clue toward unearthing the link between Chromatics and human biotech.

The research team was able to provide a detailed technical schematic to Cassel, including the observation that the ship's design contained surprising parallels to the Orgotek Locust. Upon reviewing this information, Cassel knew this similarity was because the Chromatic fighter *is* an Orgotek Locust. Specifically, an early prototype design Cassel made before the psi orders went public. The design has been altered to include self-repair systems that surpass the Locust, but the prototype had a specific heat sink issue that Cassel corrected before the Locust went into production which remains in the Chromatic design. Even the fully biotech engine includes elements taken from the Locust prototype, though it also includes various genetic sequences and features Cassel has only seen on Qin technology.

Only a handful of people ever saw the prototype Locust — Matthieu Zweidler, Solveig Larssen, and Ellayne Cassel. Of them, Zweidler never saw the final plans and only Larssen and Ellayne knew of the heat sink glitch. Larssen pointed the problem out to Alex, and Ellayne learned about it when Alex darted out of bed at four in the morning having solved the flaw. To Alex's mind, this means either Zweidler decided to make his own space-fighter plans and inadvertently inserted the same glitch (unlikely on both fronts),

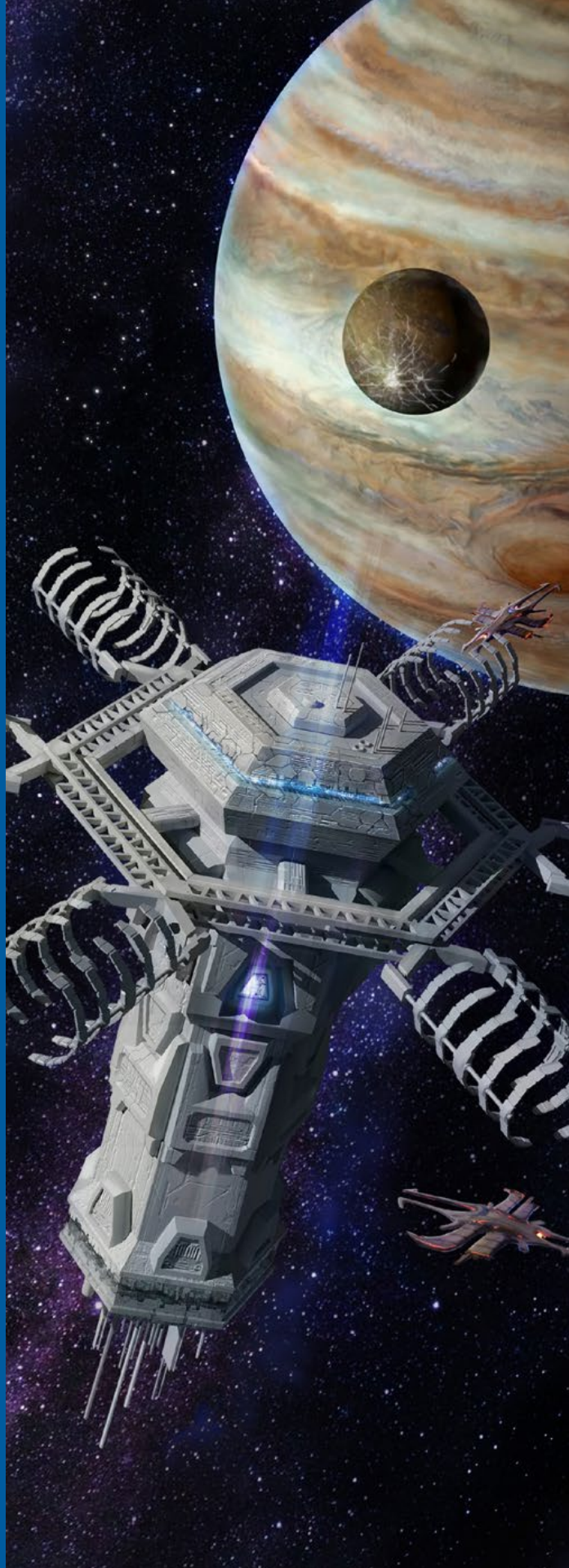
Larssen betrayed humanity to an alien species (also unlikely), Ellayne betrayed Alex (almost impossible), or the design was stolen by an unknown party. As neither Aberrants nor the Qin were unaware of the existence of human psions at the time, they are not likely culprits. The more Alex turns this revelation over in his head, the more he eliminates all but one conclusion: The Doyen.

Alex fully trusted the Doyen when the proxies initially gathered. He believed their mysterious benefactors to be benevolent, wise, and genuinely concerned for humanity's future. The intervening years have eroded that trust. As inexplicable events mount, such as the fall of the Chitra Bhanu and the revelation of Chromatic technology's human roots, Alex is formulating a theory that the Doyen are playing humanity. He has no idea what their endgame might be, as their actions appear quite contradictory at times. He also lacks evidence that firmly ties the Doyen to any of these events beyond his own hunches and gut feelings. He hopes to establish something more substantial before raising his concerns to the other proxies.

## Khantze Lu Ge

Orgotek maintains a small but vital presence on Khantze Lu Ge. Based out of the Yangara arcology, the Lu Geian Support Initiative includes some of the foremost minds in weapon and security design Psi Orgotek has to offer. The team is responsible for the design and maintenance of most of the security systems installed throughout Yangara after UN forces were able to liberate the arcology from Aberrant control. It is largely thanks to the innovations of this team that the once embattled arcology now stands as a near impregnable anchor on the front lines of the Lu Geian war.

Three of the Orgotek psions stationed here were present at the battle of the *Esperanza*. The horrors they witnessed that day prepared them for life on the Lu Geian battlefront, and each is eager to deliver as much payback to the Aberrants as they can. In their minds, the forces of Kali and



Yog-Death are perfectly serviceable stand-ins for the Aberrants who brought down the *Esperanza*. Cassel, being privy to each tek's psych evaluations, is aware of the fury that burns within these three. Despite initial misgivings, Cassel approved their requests to be assigned to the first wave of reinforcements dispatched to the besieged colony, under the condition they maintain ongoing therapy with an Orgotek telepath trained in psychology and Rapport.

An additional 20-30 Orgotek psions, along with 250 neutral support staff, are stationed at Yangara. While most of these personnel serve in technical or logistics positions, there are a handful of Operations trained psions among the deployment serving as field combatants.

Orgotek is also establishing a presence in the southern arcology of Nuevo Cuzco. In 2123, Orgosoft Farms sent 300 employees, including five psions, to establish a bioVARG factory in Nuevo Cuzco. Working in cooperation with Norça, the group hopes to have the Nuevo Cuzco factory online and productive within the next three to six months. Orgotek hopes that onsite bioVARG production can shift the conflict in favor of the colonists.

## THE LEVIATHAN PROGRAM

Though various colonies are limited to interactions guided by the Æon Trinity or a single government or psi order, the Leviathan program plugs Orgotek into interstellar travel at the source. While Upeo wa Macho has returned to Earth and resumed their mission to take humanity to the stars, neither Æon nor Orgotek have any intention of slowing down the creation and deployment of Leviathans, or of designing and building other jump-capable vessels. Several pockets of extrasolar humanity did not fare well during the Upeo exodus, and the Leviathans keep humanity from putting all its interstellar travel capabilities in a single set of hands. However, no Leviathan goes into service without a contingent of Orgotek support staff. With multiple Leviathans in service and several more in various stages of design and construction, Orgotek is reaching out to the stars in numbers unseen outside Upeo wa Macho.

The Leviathan program has been eye opening for Orgotek on several levels. The relationship between Orgotek and the Qin has grown considerably because of collaboration on the creation of Tesser technology, a fact causing concern within the ranks of the Ministry. Tensions occasionally flare between teks and Ministry officials tied to the Leviathan project, though both sides are quick to cool in the presence of the Qin. Neither group wishes to see diplomatic relations with humanity's closest allies interrupted over a spat between psi orders.

Orgotek has also offered personnel to aid Upeo wa Macho in their current shipbuilding initiatives. The offer has so far been soundly rejected, as the Upeo tend to see Orgotek as incompetent and meddlesome. This rejection of aid coupled with the personal resentment Alex Cassel holds toward Bolade Atwan for the Upeo disappearance has widened the gap between Orgotek and the Upeo. For her part, Atwan regards Orgotek nearly as warily as she does the Ministry. In her mind, Cassel was a little too eager to take the Ministry's side when they called for restrictions on Upeo wa Macho. This sentiment funnels down the chain of command in both orders. While individual teks and Upeo might get along, the organizations maintain a cool distance whenever possible. For the moment, neither order's dislike of the other is severe enough to prevent productive cooperation. Chances are good if a teleporter is found among an Orgotek operation, that teleporter has broken ranks with Upeo wa Macho, likely over the exodus itself. While Orgotek does have teleporters who have been activated through a Chamber exchange, they are a tiny minority within a small minority in Psi Orgotek's ranks. On the other hand, Atwan only accepts electrokinetics into the Upeo who were discovered by Upeo recruiters and granted the Prometheus Effect through purchase from Orgotek. She is too cautious to let a former Orgotek employee who may well maintain connections to their old psi order into the ranks of her organization. As a result, Upeo employs a relatively small electrokinetic population, despite the relative commonality of electrokinetic latency.

# COLLEAGUES AND COLLABORATORS

Psi Orgotek maintains several strong alliances with other psi orders, the UN, and an array of corporations who employ current or former Teks.

## THE ÆON TRINITY

Psi Orgotek maintains a tremendous presence in Chicago. Constant collaboration with the Æon Trinity ensures an ongoing flow of Orgotek psions between Staten Island and the Cube. At any given moment there are hundreds of Æon Trinity operations underway. As Orgotek is a frequent and enthusiastic collaborator with the Æon Trinity, many members of Psi Orgotek maintain a second home in Chicago.

It is not uncommon for Orgotek psions to spend several years moving from assignment to assignment with Æon, returning rarely, if ever, to exclusive work with Orgotek. Alex Cassel is reluctant to pull psions off Æon assignments, doing so only as a last resort. The prexy is acutely aware how much sway Æon holds not only politically, but in the arena of public opinion. As such, he dedicates considerable effort to ensuring Æon is well served and pleased with Orgotek's performance in all joint operations. It does not hurt that the Æon Trinity's goals align with Orgotek's in nearly all cases.

This relationship, Orgotek's track record, and a shared camaraderie from existing within the FSA, has bought the psi order a great deal of leeway with the Trinity. Keeping in the Trinity's good graces has always been, and remains, a high priority for the electrokinetic order. As Æon oversees biotech oversight throughout settled space, it is in Orgotek's best interests to keep Æon onside.

## THE ÆSCULAPIAN ORDER

Orgotek has enjoyed a strong relationship with the Æsculapian Order since before psions went public. Prexy Cassel and Dr. Matthieu Zweidler worked side by side (along with Dr. S.K. Bhurano) in the early days of the psi orders, laying the foundations of noetic science and building the basics of noetic biotechnology. The pair maintain a strong professional relationship and this relationship extends to the orders under their control. Orgotek is active in restoration and relief efforts across Europe, serving as a technical arm and support system for the Æsculapian Order and the UN. With humanity's return to the stars, this cooperation now extends throughout settled space. Orgotek psions often accompany docs into dangerous areas to provide protection and technical support.

## LIGHTBRINGER

The current leading producer of visual effects technology, Lightbringer, is run by two members of Psi Orgotek. Lightbringer CEO Corwin Gamble, and their lead developer Eric Harriman are both former Orgotek employees. Coming from previous positions in Orgosoft Farms and Lumen respectively, these psions initially pitched Lightbringer to Alex Cassel as a new entertainment division for the metacorporation. While Cassel loved the pitch and saw the potential profits Lightbringer could bring, he felt the venture just did not fit within the larger metacorporate structure. Instead of moving forward with Lightbringer under the Orgotek umbrella, Cassel granted Gamble and Harriman a respectable severance package, seed funding, and control of the patents for the items presented during the pitch.

Now based in Sydney, Lightbringer operates from a 30-story headquarters, complete with three on-site studios and ten floors of manufacturing space. Profits are through the roof and Lightbringer is the fastest growing company in the entertainment business. As Gamble and Harriman remain members of Psi Orgotek, Lightbringer also provides an easy avenue for the order to interact with various media production companies without bringing the corporate baggage that comes with the Orgotek metacorporation. In an industry based on facades, presentation, and masquerades, the illusion of distance from Orgotek is extremely valuable to Cassel.

## LINMA TELCOM

Officially, Orgotek has no presence in Luna's Boltzmann Crater, apart from a small office and apartment they rent on site for the WEI liaison to Boltzmann Industrial Launch Systems. However, Psi Orgotek has an additional point of access into the independent site. That point of access is through Linma Telcom. Founded by Christina Stern, Linma Telcom is a company focused on communications applications of light through photokinesis. Like the founders of Lightbringer, Stern is a member of Psi Orgotek who has left the company but remains involved with the Psi Order. In exchange for a stipend

from Psi Orgotek to offset operational costs, Linma Telcom maintains a barracks and hangar tube for Psi Orgotek use. This causes minor friction with other members of the Boltzmann Security Consortium who accuse Linma Telcom of providing Alex Cassel a back-door presence in the governmental body. Stern resents this accusation, shooting it down whenever it is mentioned.

### THE MARTEL

Rumors persist that Orgotek is providing ongoing aid and support to the Martel, a warlord who claims dominion over the *Pont Harlequin* area in France (**Terra Firma**, p. 38). The rumors are true. Psi Orgotek provides technology and material support to the Martel. In exchange, the Martel provides Orgotek with an easy means of smuggling supplies, research materials, and people into and out of *la Blessure*. This relationship benefits not only Orgotek, but the Æsculapian Order, whose hospital, the *Montreuil*, is stationed in *Pont Harlequin*. Orgotek's ongoing cooperation with the Martel is contingent upon his people providing protection and unmolested movement to the relief workers from the *Montreuil* as well as patients seeking their aid.

Psi Orgotek's activities in *la Blessure* are varied but most revolve around gathering research materials for combating the effects of Corruption. While the data Orgotek collects in Wycoff's Blight via the Blightwalkers (p. 135) is incredibly valuable, smuggling research materials out of the Blight is nearly impossible and not worth the risk. *La Blessure* provides easier access to flora, fauna, and people impacted directly by Corruption. Much of this research is as illegal in Europe as it is in the FSA, but oversight is far less strict in these last vestiges of France.

### OBC

Australia is the epicenter of the entertainment industry. While several Orgotek divisions dabble in entertainment, none make it their primary focus. However, there are several members of Psi Orgotek who remain part of the psi order yet have left the company proper to pursue the glamour and fortune of a career in Sydney. OBC, arguably the largest broadcasting company in settled space, employs several members of Psi Orgotek. Members of Psi Orgotek in OBC's employ have enabled a strong and productive working relationship between the psi order and the broadcasting company.

## BLOCKERS AND CHALLENGES

As heirs to the prexy's personality, most Orgotek employees enjoy the challenge of confronting and overcoming obstacles and challenges. Those below are some of the more intractable Orgotek faces.

### THE FSA

Orgotek's relationship with the FSA is complicated. The Board of Directors were born and raised in the FSA, and all seek to make it a better place. Orgotek strongly encourages all employees who are financially able to purchase first-class citizenship to provide a strong voting bloc. While the benefits of this regarding psion rights and psi laws is obvious, Orgotek also spends significant effort combatting the inherent fascism of the FSA wherever they can. Reforming the metacorporate military complex from the inside is a long, slow, often disappointing process. Compromises are routinely required, and patience is vital to enact any true change. The Board is careful not to push too hard against FSA restrictions, to avoid inviting more trouble with a government that would love nothing more than to seize the company and use its assets for their own ends.

However, thanks to the masterful leadership of the Board, the vast and growing voting block of Orgotek employees, and Orgotek's expansive legal department, the metacorporation has made significant progress in carving out a safer niche for Orgotek to operate. The WEI Arcology on Staten Island provides a secure central hub for Orgotek's operations, psionic or otherwise, right on the FSA's doorstep. Orgotek benefits greatly from the extraterritorial ("XT") status of the WEI arcology that lets the megacorporation set its own laws and regulations within its FSA holdings. However, maintaining that status relies on constant legal maneuvering and careful management of Psi Orgotek's activities within the FSA at large.

#### THE BLIGHT ZONE

Officially, the FSA has denied all psi orders access to Wycoff's Blight (apart from begrudgingly accepting the presence of the Fifth Legion). Orgotek recognizes FSA law, and while Cassel is willing to stretch those laws as far as possible, he is not willing

to blatantly break them if it's avoidable. As Orgotek must tread carefully when operating within the FSA, even shadow operations are entirely too risky for members in good standing. As a result, Cassel formed the Blightwalkers.

According to Psi Orgotek paperwork, each member of the Blightwalkers was removed from active membership after an escalating series of disciplinary incidents. Officially, they are no longer members of Psi Orgotek, they receive no support from the company, and they are listed as wanted for questioning in all Orgotek's XT holdings within the FSA. They are effectively rogue psions. This is, of course, a ruse. Records of disciplinary actions and transgressions by the Blightwalkers are falsified. Truthfully, the group consists of unfailingly loyal members of Psi Orgotek with strong personal dedication to understanding and eradicating Corruption. Each member willingly sacrificed a promising career and any hope of a normal life to provide Orgotek a deniable research wing inside Wycoff's Blight.

The Blightwalkers use equipment and vehicles, listed as stolen from Orgotek, as a mobile research facility. The group travels from Blight town to Blight town collecting data and samples, and where possible offering aid to residents. The team's vitakinetic, Dr. Shelby Webb, provides medical care to those willing to accept it wherever the Blightwalkers travel. Word of these goodwill efforts travels across Wycoff's Blight on the lips of nomad bands and traders, providing the psions with a respected reputation among the folk who live in the Blight.

The FSM is aware of the Blightwalkers and considers their capture a high priority. The CSA believes that if they can get access to the research and materials used by these allegedly rogue psions, they might be able to trace a connection back to Orgotek and finally have sufficient grounds to put a leash on the prexy in court. Of course, Cassel is not so sloppy as to leave any trace of his involvement with the Blightwalkers. He routinely acquires research data from the Blightwalker database using the Subquantum Computing electrokinesis power (**Trinity Continuum: Æon** p. 232), which grants him untraceable access to the data. He then stores the findings with Lex (p. 124) and seeds the findings throughout Orgotek's legal Corruption-based research projects.

# NOTABLE MEMBERS

Although the Cassels are undoubtedly the public face of the Big O, there are several members of Psi Orgotek who don't receive quite as much of the spotlight but are vital to the psi order.

## ALEX AND ELLAYNE CASSEL

Orgotek focuses a great deal of its public relations message on Alex and Ellayne Cassel. They are both incredibly talented and accomplished executives with charisma, poise, and little by way of personal or professional scandal. The media loves Orgotek and Orgotek reciprocates that love.

Alex Cassel is a man with plans within schemes, all running simultaneously with layers of contingencies built in. Even before his transformation to proxy, Alex was a genius-level intellect who could see more sides and solutions to problems than most people thought existed. Unlocking his electrokinetic potential has simply enhanced this aspect of his abilities.

Alex is charismatic and personable to almost everyone despite the enormous privilege his gifts bring. He takes care to get to know people and make them feel at ease no matter the supposed disparity between their status and his. He genuinely strives for human prosperity and advancement, and works near tirelessly for a day when national, ethnic, religious, and social barriers are no longer impediments to humanity's potential. He is fiercely competitive but is both a gracious winner and loser. He believes technology and psionics are the keys to humanity achieving the utopian goal and privately loves when rivals develop new technologies or methods before Orgotek, because they're competition with him drives them to bring humanity closer to his vision.

The perfect complement to Alex's vision, Ellayne Cassel is the not-so-hidden face of Orgotek. She's responsible for guiding much of the company's success and directly manages the media strategies and public relations campaigns that make Orgotek an interstellar darling. Ellayne was also responsible for her and Alex's meeting in college, deciding to attend a technology futures discussion on a whim, despite only having minimal interest in the subject at the time and needing to study for finals. Alex was holding court among the group Ellayne joined, the two became friends and soon after lovers, and have been together since.

Ellayne is proud of her husband and what they've accomplished, but she saw changes on his return from wherever the proxies first met, and not just from his newfound electrokinetic awareness. She sometimes feels the urge to drop in on Alex unexpectedly, wherever he is. In these moments, she usually finds him intensely focused on whatever he's doing with little recognition for anything going on around him, often seeming to not even recognize her when she makes herself known. This always passes immediately, but noticeably, to Ellayne's familiar eye. More recently, she's noticed Alex watching her when he thinks she can't see, with an expression she recognizes as him considering a problem he's trying to eliminate. These moments are always brief, and through gentle questioning Ellayne has learned that Alex himself isn't aware of this behavior. She's debating whether to tell him; her gut tells her she should. She usually follows these instincts and is preparing for how to conduct this difficult conversation.

### CORLJIN GAMBLE

Corwin Gamble is the CEO and co-founder of Lightbringer, the largest special effects provider in Sydney, Australia. Working alongside photokinetic wunderkind Eric Harriman, Gamble has rocketed to the top of the entertainment industry, providing better-than-real holosim technology to production houses throughout the entertainment mecca of settled space. While Lightbringer is an incredibly busy company, it requires comparatively little micromanagement from the CEO. Gamble has a small fortune, access to the greatest technology and performers humanity has to offer, and a great deal of unstructured time. For a while, he dabbled in the idea of making a comedy sim.

Then *Esperanza* happened.

Corwin Gamble is still an active member of Psi Orgotek. When distress signals came from *Esperanza*, Corwin and five other Lightbringer teks mobilized. Thanks to connections with the Legions, the Lightbringer staff were able to hitch a ride with the support team sent to *Esperanza* from Sydney Spaceport. When they arrived on the scene, it was clear the station could not be saved. However, there were still hundreds of people alive and trapped above the *Esperanza* as Zeus prepared to knock the station out of orbit. Corwin and his allies began working to evacuate as many survivors as they could. Corwin saw the *Esperanza* wrestled from the heavens and watched it transform into a fireball as the massive orbital platform broke atmosphere.

The experience scarred Corwin, but it also inspired him. After completing initial trauma counseling, Corwin decided he would share his experience with the world. With that, preproduction on *Esperanza: The Day the Sky Fell* a three-part docusim on the *Esperanza* tragedy and its aftermath.

## EX-EMPLOYEES

Being a former member of Orgotek is a matter of degrees. There is a considerable difference between being an ex-employee of the company and being a former member of the psi order. The nature of Psi Orgotek as a semi-separate structure from Orgotek corporate enables members of the psi order to remain so while pursuing their own fortunes. This often puts ex-employees in business competition with Orgotek while remaining active members of the psi order. According to Alex Cassel, this presents no contradiction or cause for concern. Healthy competition is good for business, after all.

Despite Orgotek's willingness to allow financial freedom to ex-employees who remain with the order, some psions are compelled to completely sever ties with the Big O. Most of the time total severance comes from a business concern, such as an offer from another psi order or company that refuses to allow the psion to remain with Psi Orgotek. On occasion, these full severance exits are the result of a clash between the psion and the order. It is extremely rare, though not entirely unheard of for the prexy to fire someone from the Psi Order.

### HUANG-MARR BIOTECHNICS

This pharmaceutical biotech company was founded by a group of ex-Orgotek employees who left the company and the psi order. Orgotek keeps tabs on the company as much as possible. While their public operations seem to be legitimate, any member of Psi Orgotek who is familiar with the founders of Huang-Marr is likely leery of the nascent metacorporation. (See **Mission Statements** for more information on this rival metacorporation.)

### LINMA TELECOM

Christina Stern is the founder and CEO of Linma Telcom, a Luna-based telecommunications company.

After five years in the Lumen research and development project, Christina resigned from Lumen and broke away to start her own business. Despite seeking corporate independence, Stern remained an affiliate of Psi Orgotek.

The initial focus of Linma Telcom was to develop light-based communication relays to facilitate faster communication within a solar system. When the Upeo disappeared, Cassel reached out to Stern to ask for aid in managing communication for the Leviathan project. While Linma Telcom was unable to manage interstellar communication, they had perfected secure point to point laser communication that allowed the Orgotek offices on the ground to maintain real-time connection with Mazat Station. This was vital in the early stages of the Leviathan Project.

When Orgotek began shifting Lumen personnel to the Karroo Mining Colony to staff CRF-2, Linma Telcom stepped with an offer to help manage the impacted workload on Lumen's other projects. Now Linma Telcom acts as a trusted freelance partner on forty percent of Lumen's operations in near space. This layer of corporate distance between Orgotek and Linma Telcom provides both parties a wealth of fringe benefits. Orgotek gets access to some of the best minds in optics, as well as an ear in the Boltzmann Security Consortium thanks to Linma Telcom's Lunar headquarters providing membership. Linma Telcom gets access to top of the line Orgotek biotech and facilities.

# DESIGNING AN ORGOTEK CAMPAIGN

Orgotek is a massive multifaceted entity. Psi Orgotek spans the metacorporation's divisions and beyond, including members who are employees or founders of other companies. In some cases, members of the Æon Trinity or other psi orders retain loyalty and membership in Psi Orgotek. This provides the Storyguide with vast opportunity to assemble a cast of diverse and unique characters who are all beholden to the structure of Psi Orgotek. This allows the Storyguide to use Psi Orgotek to provide assignments, rewards, and reprimands, as well as guidance if the troupe should stray too far from the initial goals of the story.

Perhaps the single most important thing to keep in mind when running an Orgotek campaign is the corporate nature of the psi order. Like many corporations, advancement and success in Orgotek are achieved not only through prowess and performance, but by leveraging a vast network of allies, acquaintances, friends, and mentors. Orgotek operatives succeed as much on the strength of those contacts as any other factor. This is part of the reason why the prexy encourages those psions who leave the corporation to remain with the psi order. Every tek out in the world starting their own company is expanding the web of contacts Psi Orgotek can draw from. Maintaining inroads to as many industry leaders in a multitude of fields is just one component of Alex Cassel's plan to build the vehicle to carry humanity into the future from Orgotek parts.

This means an Orgotek campaign can easily focus on the pursuit of pleasing contacts. Missions that revolve around preventing (or performing) espionage for a former employee's new company are just as likely and just as valid as those focusing on joint operations with the Æon Trinity or another psi order. Favors for friends are common among Psi Orgotek, and an electrokinetic who has banked enough favors from enough influential teks with enough money can accomplish just about any goal.

Psi Orgotek has existed for nearly two decades, and Orgotek has existed as a company for even longer. Children born to parents employed by Orgotek are growing to adulthood. Industries unheard of prior to Orgotek's founding are now led by experts with years of experience who train enthusiastic and skilled successors and apprentices. As employees leave Orgotek to start their own companies and seek their own fortunes, they remain connected with the Psi Order, expanding Orgotek's reach further across the metacorporate landscape. These paths and edges reflect the expanding influence of Orgotek.

## SECOND GENERATION TEK (ORIGIN)

The character was raised in the corporate culture of Orgotek. Their parents may be psions who work within Psi Orgotek and live in the WEI Arcology, or they may be neutral employees working in a far-flung recruitment center. The family may have been with the company as long as your character can remember, or they may have just come to Orgotek within the past couple of years. Whatever the case, your character has a leg up on those who are new to the company, as they are familiar with corporate culture and etiquette. Chances are good the character's family has allies and rivals within the company who may work to help or hinder the character's efforts.

### PATH CONCEPTS

Biotech prodigy, disinterested heir, rebellious youth, competitive aspirant, independent worker

**Example Connections:** WEI administrator, Orgosoft Farms foreman, Tekne engineer, Lumen holosim programmer, Operations officer, Recruitment center management

**Skills:** Culture, Enigmas, Science, Technology

**Edges:** Dual Citizenship, Library (• to •••), Ms. Fix It, Patron (• to •••), Weak Spots, Wealth (• to •••••)

## BIOTECH ENGINEER (ROLE)

The character is an expert biotech engineer. Your expertise keeps things running smoothly. Whether you are on the crew of a Leviathan or a lone inventor working for a startup in your garage, you have learned the ins and outs of bioware design and maintenance. You can repair and replace damaged bioware in the field and are accustomed to squeezing the maximum performance out of the devices you maintain.

### PATH CONCEPTS

Arcology maintenance worker, Bioware inventor, Leviathan technician, Orgosoft farms worker

**Example Connections:** FSA inspector, ISRA Pilot, Ministry diplomat, Qin bioengineer, Triton Division technician

**Skills:** Enigmas, Pilot, Science, Technology

**Edges:** Alien (Qin) Partnership, Dual Citizenship, Increased Tolerance (• to •••), Ms. Fix It, Computer Enhancement (Biocomp only), Variable Gravity Training, Weak Spots, Wealth (• to •••••)

## ORGOTEK OUTCAST (ROLE)

The character is officially blacklisted from Orgotek, disavowed and rogue. Careful manipulation of your records paints you as the worst kind of traitor to the psi order, when in truth your loyalty and dedication to the prexy's vision is unmatched. You work in areas Orgotek can't go to gather data and advance the order's understanding. If captured, you're on your own, but you're highly capable of looking after yourself.

### PATH CONCEPTS

Blight Walker, Black market bioware trader,

**Example Connections:** Black market fences, Blight survivors, Fifth Legion scouts, local law enforcement, smugglers

**Skills:** Empathy, Integrity, Larceny, Survival

**Edges:** Always Prepared, Covert (• to •••), Danger Sense, Extraction Plan (• to •••••), Iron Will (• to •••), Tough Cookie 2

### SPECIAL EDGE: EXTRACTION PLAN (• TO •••••)

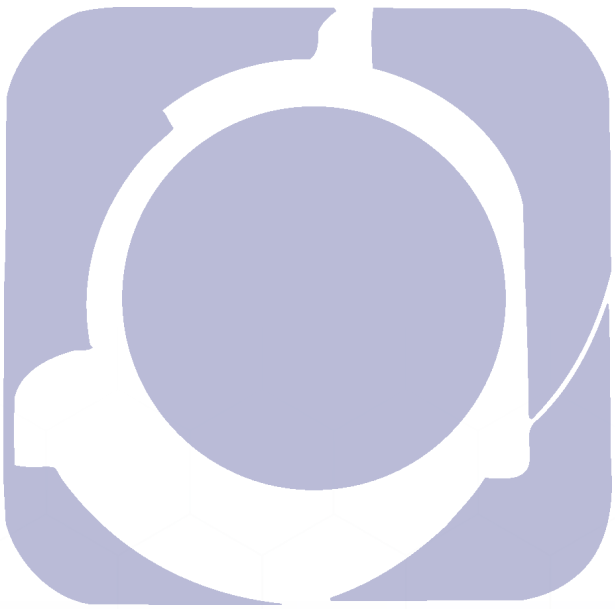
The character is especially good at knowing how to get out of a situation. You always seem to have a bribed guard, map of the stormwater system, getaway driver, or freelance teleporter waiting for your signal when you need it. The character gains access to Dramatic Editing (**Trinity Continuum**

**Core**, p.154) but only in situations where escape seems impossible. The number of dots the character has in this Edge counts as the number of points of Inspiration the character can spend. These are not true Inspiration and can only be used with this Edge. This Edge can only be used once per scene; spent Edge dots don't replenish until the start of the next game session.

### SPECIAL EDGE: PSI ORGOTEK AFFILIATE (••)

**Prerequisite:** Psion with an Allegiance other than Orgotek

Your character was once an employee of Orgotek but has since parted ways with the metacorporation. The end of employment at the company did not signal the end of the character's relationship with Psi Orgotek. In fact, they are still a member in good standing. This permits the character to purchase edges, equipment, and other perks as if they were a member of Orgotek with a Path rating of one. Several psi orders, governments, and other potential employers frown on this practice. If the character is a member of another psi order, this Edge generates a +2 Complication (untrustworthy) to all social interactions when dealing with members of that order. No matter how many times a psion with this Edge proves their loyalty, they will continue to come under suspicion while they maintain membership in a second psi order.



CHAPTER EIGHT

# UPEO WA MACHO

"The Cosmos extends, for all practical purposes, forever. After a brief sedentary hiatus, we are resuming our ancient nomadic way of life."
— Carl Sagan

Teleporters, explorers, heroes, and humanists, the Upeo wa Macho strive to bring humanity to the stars, and bring a brighter life to all humans, on Earth and beyond. Founded by Proxy Bolade Atwan, former astronaut and transportation mogul, the Upeo are an imperfect organization, but one dedicated to the greater good. No group is without flaw, as humans are imperfect individuals, yet through dedication, desire, and bold dreams, the Upeo wa Macho hope to inspire others to walk among the stars.

Proxy Atwan has a pragmatic nature, and she views the naming of the Prometheus Effect through this lens. Africa's rich cultures are too diverse to have a single legend like that of Prometheus, and Bolade believes the important part of that legend is the fire, not the god. Humanity took the gift and continues to strive to prove the species worthy. Such it is with psi, especially teleportation, and Atwan makes no apologies for only sharing the gift with those responsible enough to be worthy of the greatest freedom humans have ever known.

# A NATION OF NOMADS

Gifted with mobility beyond peer, the Upeo wa Macho sacrifice their personal freedom in service to humanity, perhaps even more than the other psi orders. Despite being the smallest remaining psi order, the Upeo wa Macho strive to be everywhere and help everyone. Just over 300 teleporters work selflessly to keep humanity connected, supported by nearly twice that number of psions from other Aptitudes and thousands of non-psion members of the order.

Since returning from self-imposed exile, the Upeo have been working harder than ever to fulfil the promise of an interstellar humanity. When Proxy Bolade Atwan returned in the wake of the Chromatic attack on Earth, she knew there would be a cost to fleeing with the order. While Joe Hologram is grateful to have the teleporters back, many outside the order, as well as those within, have had their trust in the proxy damaged.

## HOPE, SACRIFICE, AND DISUNITY

The Upeo took humanity from their pale blue home and its nearest neighbors to a new frontier. Aberrants had already travelled to distant stars, but few did so with the needs of humanity at the forefront of their minds. With the arrival of the Upeo, the teleporters rapidly expanded the horizons of human civilization. The collective dream of visiting the stars in the sky and beyond become reality, a gift the jumpers were happy to share.

Before the creation of the Leviathan jump ships, all practical interstellar travel and communication was at the hands of the teleporters, with most of these psions being members of the Upeo wa Macho. Every other psi order wanted teleporters within their numbers, but most teleporters felt drawn to the Upeo and wanted to move with it, despite the demands on their talents and lives. The Upeo wa Macho ensure every latent teleporter knows the burden they're about to share before they enter the Prometheus Chamber.

Upeo wa Macho members dedicate themselves to service and ensuring the survival of humanity across the vast spread of the species' presence. This isn't entirely born from selfless motivations. Most teleporters feel the yearning to travel and explore, to visit the familiar and find the new. No other group offers the freedom, support, and encouragement to move throughout the galaxy as whim and opportunity takes you. Within other orders, teleporters are rare, coveted, and strategically guided and managed in what they do and where they go. Within the Upeo, jumpers choose their own paths and follow their zest for freedom — after all, Upeo wa Macho means 'the horizon.' Or at least, it felt this way before the exodus.

### THE LOST EXPEDITION OF 2110

Exploring new worlds is always risky. While the Upeo try to psionically survey planets before visiting them, full exploration is impossible at interstellar distance. Psions leap into the unknown aware that any mission could be their final one.

The psi order suffered catastrophe less than five years after declaring its existence. A member of the Kupita named Hampsah Cisse returned from an exploration mission brimming with excitement at what she had found. She told of discovering an intelligent alien species whose world was suffering catastrophic climate collapse, and how the Upeo should assemble to rescue and relocate these beings. Cisse spoke of her friendly first contact with the aliens and the potential this contact had for humanity. As the first such species discovered since the Qin, Atwan was interested but needed to know more. Upeo telepaths confirmed the truth of Cisse's tale, and clairsentients surveyed the location and verified a planet matching what Cisse described. Satisfied, Proxy Atwan authorized Kupita's action. The chama formed the first wave of a rescue force with over 100 psions — mostly teleporters — and 400 neutral nguzo personnel. Cisse performed the teleport from the Launchpad and the excited group vanished. None returned.

In the aftermath of their loss, Bolade led rescuers to the location and found nothing. No planet matching Cisse's description was anywhere near where she claimed. No trace of the expedition, casualties, wreckage, or any other evidence of what occurred was there. The order's clairsentients searched the area but couldn't relocate the planet they had confirmed. Others more skilled in the Psychometry Mode followed the noetic connections of each member of the expedition but each ended at the moment they left the Launchpad.

With no answers except to reinforce the dangers of interstellar exploration, Proxy Atwan, along with Kupita director Gerard Portois, personally expressed their sympathies to the families of every member lost. The mystery of this loss sent shockwaves through the order and reinforced the rarity and fragility of the teleporters' gifts.

## EXILE

After the destruction of the Chitra Bhanu, the Upeo wa Macho became the smallest psi order. Teleportation latency is rare, and while the order includes hundreds of psions of other Aptitudes, the limiting factor on how much the Upeo can do always rests on the availability of jumpers. Small numbers bring familiarity, and every psion in the Upeo knows nearly all their peers, by reputation if not personally. Even jumpers who moved to other psi orders or organizations maintained their familiar links and social networks within the Upeo, as teleportation depends on noetic connections, and they'd never know when they'll need a friend to lead the way to an unfamiliar location.

Proxy Atwan drew on these ties when evacuating the teleporters in 2116. Members of the Upeo wa Macho trusted Bolade's judgement and headed to the Launchpad waiting for her signal. Those with teleporter friends outside the order rapidly made contact — with Atwan at their side — and convinced the other jumpers of the danger. The external threat to the teleporters' freedom, the proxy's force of will, and the community felt between the teleporters convinced even those who had doubts. Later analysis from detractors outside the order, and some within, speculated the Teleportation Prometheus Chamber instilled some degree of cohesion to Atwan that she exploited to force teleporters to leave, though no data supports or disproves this theory. Regardless, in less than an hour, every teleporter and many of the Nguzo were gone from Earth.

On Ruan's World the implications of the teleporters' decision began to take hold. They were variously shocked, upset, or uncertain about the decision. Many wanted to return to Earth to confirm the proxy's fears, but she counselled against it, and they obeyed. The teleporters' freedom was curtailed, but not completely taken. They could still travel the galaxy, just not the Sol System. For seven years, not only were the Upeo a psi order, but they were an interstellar colony and a de facto nation. The Upeo and the other teleporters were family.

## RETURN

Atwan was never completely ignorant of events on Earth. She periodically sent her most trusted comrades to outer Sol space with Nguzo telepaths and clears to spy on events and check on other groups' attitudes about the Upeo. The first visits confirmed the anger of the other proxies and reaffirmed Bolade's choice about the order to flee. A later visit learned of the fall of the Esperanza many months before. As it was too late for the teleporters to do anything to prevent the tragedy, Atwan kept this information to her closest advisers. Some argued for the order's return, but the majority sided with the proxy. All present helped keep the secret, but this began the cracks that continued to spread throughout the Upeo. When the Upeo learned of the Chromatic attack on Earth shortly after it occurred support shifted against the proxy and her friends pushed her to reverse their exile. Reluctantly, she agreed, gathered the teleporters together to advise them of events and commenced their return to Earth.

### THE UPEO TODAY

To outsiders, the Upeo wa Macho appears as it always was. Inside the order, fractures widen. Those opposed to the exile are the most vocal, calling on Bolade Atwan to justify the lives of her several hundred teleporters against the millions of lives lost while the Upeo fled. Was their freedom worth the price?

Atwan still commands the respect of most of her psi order, yet the conflict grows. No other teleporter matches Bolade's raw power and versatility but running a psi order requires more than psionic power. Unprecedented numbers of Upeo wa Macho leave to follow their own paths, while many who remain debate how to save their order.

# CLUBS UPON A PILLAR

On completing the Long Race, Proxy Atwan usually places new teleporters in a chama based on her assessment of their strengths. This assignment doesn't prevent individuals moving to other chama over time. The order believes those who do what they desire will do their best work. Transfers aren't denied without cause, but Aptitude focus still guides choices. In general, Long Riders favor the Translocation Mode, Kupita focus on Transmassion, and the Mwitu often have strength in Transportal. The Nguzo are masters of everything else. The new Wawindaji chama (p. 144) takes on those with the anger to fight regardless of which Modes its members favor.

Upeo rank structure is deliberately flat. Atwan expects all teleporters to be broadly capable in whatever situation they find themselves. Each chama has a director with broad power to make decisions and assign tasks. These directors choose 'kiongozi' (leaders) to take responsibility for an assignment, empowering them to gather resources as required and trusting them to ask for help if needed. The kiongozi builds whatever command structure they believe works best for success, which ends when an individual leaves the group or the task is completed.

## LONG RIDERS

The Long Riders are stalwart individuals who roam the stars in service to others. Though officially based out of Usio (p. 145), individual Long Riders

spend more time in far-flung colonies than they do on Earth. Veteran teleporter Jennifer Shojiki has run the chama since inception. Before the formation of the Wawindaji, The Long Riders were the smallest chama, moving from colony to colony on short notice with little more than a sturdy backpack to contain their packages and a minicomp.

The Long Riders have permanent facilities on Earth, Luna, Mars, Averiguas, Far Nyumba, Karroo, Ruan's World, Khantze Lu Ge, and Qinshui. Most of these are large enough to warehouse impending shipments, provide comfortable quarters to a half dozen or more Nguzo, and smaller rooms for any Long Rider who needs them. Long Rider temporary facilities and outposts on smaller colonies are more spartan, little more than dedicated storage space and a few bunks for the Nguzo and any visiting psion.

Long Riders don't work for free, instead operating on a sliding scale determined by the individual couriers, or barter if the Long Rider thinks it more appropriate. The chama does not operate for profit, instead pouring their income back into the psi order. Any Long Rider caught using their position for personal gain is censured and often removed from their route.

## KUPITA

Peerless explorers and scouts, the Kupita brave more unknown systems and worlds than any organization in human history. Averiguas, Bullseye, Eden, Karroo, Marfisa, Ruan's World, and Skete were all first explored, at least in part, by Kupita. To this chama goes the glory of discovery and the thrill and adventure of meeting new alien species. Psions in Kupita know some of the greatest victories of the Upeo wa Macho, but the chama has suffered more than most, with the Lost Expedition mainly formed from Kupita.

Despite this, Kupita remains the largest chama. The Upeo's most powerful Transmassion specialists work here, as well as most of the clairsentients within the Upeo. The Kupita also controls the Upeo wa Macho non-combat space fleet, with the order's small contingent of fighters and warships recently transferred to Wawindaji command. With construction well underway on Mansa Qu, the order's orbital shipyard at Ruan's World, the Kupita's space assets continue growing. Bolade Atwan and Gerard Portois, the Kupita director, have discussed forming another chama to manage the growing fleet, but for now it remains here.

## MWITU

The wolves of the Upeo are neither loners nor cruel predators. They are the bold pack hunting for trouble. To be a Mwitu is to risk life and limb in service to strangers. Mwitu are fearless protectors, providing search and rescue, emergency medical services, and other crisis response to those in need, only baring their fangs to those who would harm innocents.

Mwitu central response runs from the Threat Response and Dispatch Center at Usio, but rapid response teams also operate from offices on Luna, Ruan's World and Far Nyumba. The Mwitu respond to any crisis when called, regardless of who asks. They leave the politics for others to sort out after victims are safe. Rarely, some malicious groups try to fake emergencies to lure psions into a trap. These fools soon quickly experience the more offensive uses of teleportation.

The head of Mwitu is Banjeet Nantaal, a former EMT from the Bharati Commonwealth before being discovered as a latent teleporter. Nantaal is working to establish a Mwitu presence in the FSA and on Mars. Banjeet runs the chama from Freedom on Ruan's World but frequently visits Usio and the other offices.

## WAWINDAJI

The Wawindaji (Swahili for 'hunter') formed within a week of the Upeo returning to Earth and Proxy Atwan learning the truth about the Chromatics' access to teleportation. This small, elite force is the Upeo wa Macho's military wing. Based out of the under-construction Mansa Qu station, members of the Wawindaji serve as security for the station when not otherwise deployed. Colonel Atieno Mwangi, formerly of the UAN Armed Forces, commands the Wawindaji but privately grates under Atwan's standing order that no strikes occur without her direct authorization.

The formation of the chama caused further division. Most Upeo see the Wawindaji as a necessary step taken to rescue their former brethren. Dissenters point out the Mwitu are already a competent rescue force and would be better suited for the operation without disrupting the already tenuous order.

The Wawindaji already has 40 combat-ready psions drawn from the other chama, plus 300 Nguzo. Atieno hand-picks his operatives based on mission needs, giving them access to many of the order's cutting edge bioapps, such as the Diata Scout bioVARG, and the small contingent of armed warships and fighters transferred from Kupita to the Wawindaji.

As a psi order and an interstellar power, Upeo wa Macho is constantly juggling numerous projects of various scales. From global scale contingency plans to mildly improved bioapps, the support staff of the Upeo are constantly pushing boundaries.

## USIO

A modern compound 20 kilometers from Mount Kenya, with room for 5,000 personnel, Usio is the heart of the nguzo. For the terrestrial headquarters of a psi order, Usio is low key and relatively undefended. Constructed from cutting edge biotech, the compound is not ostentatious. A half dozen buildings provide working space for a variety of nguzo functions, while two more are home to the Mwitu's Threat Response and Dispatch Center, a bleeding edge data analysis center to coordinate threat response throughout the solar system. Most Upeo telepaths work here, maintaining constant communication with Mwitu response team kiongozi, and liaisons within the Æsculapian Order's Haitian control center.

## PROJECT UNITY

To truly be unified, humanity requires the ability to communicate effectively regardless of distance. People on Earth enjoy near constant instantaneous digital connection, and telepaths and telepathic bioapps allow instant communications across the Sol system. Every human colony has a functioning OpNet, but the dream of a digitally connected humanity across the stars has yet to be realized.

Teleporters, particularly Long Riders, are still the fastest and most reliable means to get a message from one system or planet to another. Jump ships allow for more people to engage in interstellar travel than ever before yet transmitting electronic communications from one system to the next — without waiting thousands of years —is a hurdle the Upeo seek to solve.

The Upeo Science Division within the Nguzo works on melding telepathic, electrokinetic, and teleportational effects into single bioapps to allow transmission of data across the stars. The team has several promising prototypes with ranges measured in AUs, but, so far, reliable interstellar communication has proved impossible. The scientists have recently learned the Twilight Entertainment Media tabloid's Dusk Whisper communicators have supposedly succeeded at interstellar communication and are eager to engage with the company to learn how. (See **Mission Statements**, for more information.)

As a byproduct of these research attempts, researchers within the order have created beacons which can be loaded with information before being sent to return to a predestined location and upload their contents, but this is not an instantaneous transmission of data.

## PROJECT ESU

Named after the Yoruba deity of crossroads (among many other things), Project Esu aims to expand the technology behind jump rings and manufacture them at scales capable of transporting space vessels, and eventually build a multi-system Transportal spaceship network. As of 2123, scientists understand the theoretical underpinnings of the project, but the construction of such massive structures is outside of the Upeo's capability. The rings would need to be several hundred meters in diameter to allow the largest ships to pass through safely, or even larger to transport full habitats and hubs of trade and scientific research.

Researchers have reached out to Æon and the other psi orders, as well as the Qin, to explore a variety of construction techniques. These partners recognize the potential of the network and are receptive to the Upeo. Though it's early on, Project Esu could be a conduit to healing lingering mistrust between the Upeo and its psi order cousins.

## FLEET OPERATIONS

When Joe Hologram thinks of the Upeo wa Macho he thinks of space and interstellar travel, but the psi order grew from Bolade Atwan's transport and shipping company, so the Upeo specialize in transportation of all types. The order maintains at least one transportation hub on every Earth continent (including Antarctica), and on every world where the Upeo maintains a permanent official presence. Each hub varies in scale and are designed to be functional sea/air/land ports, and Upeo members in human space can often call on a variety of vehicles as needed.

The order also works on expanding its space fleet with its own designs. While the Æon Trinity and the other psi orders have had great success with their Leviathan jump ships, the Upeo prefer to draw on

their strengths and incorporate Teleportation Helms into their vessels. This allows them to design smaller craft, or to open up usable space in their larger ships.

In addition to the Sungura and Bundi class explorers (***Æon Æxpansion,*** p. 29, and **Distant Worlds**, p. 123, respectively) and the Chui class frigate (**Distant Worlds**, p. 123), Upeo shipwrights have deployed the technologically advanced Karwe class light cruiser (p. 192) and the massive Nyangumi class colony mover (p. 193). The Nyangumi are key to the Upeo's planetary evacuation plans (see below) and are intended to carry nearly 400,000 people for brief periods.

## EXODUS OPERATIONS

With improvement and expansion of Ruan's World, as well as the expanded space fleet, the Upeo can already relocate the entire psi order to their extrasolar redoubt within hours — something they haven't shared with the other psi orders. Strategists within the Nguzo plan for scenarios including the possible mass evacuation of humanity due to impending planetary cataclysms. These Nguzo have plans for Earth, Luna, Mars, and every major extrasolar colony. While the order has plans, it knows it's far from being able execute them. As such, the Nguzo have also developed pathways for the Upeo to be able to deliver on this goal by 2140.

Exodus Ops employs most of the order's diplomatic personnel and social scientists. Upeo diplomats are working on laying inroads with major nations and metacorporations to gain their cooperation with evacuation policies. Sociologists and psychologists meanwhile work to develop the most efficient means of crowd control and psychological response to rapid resettlement.

## PROJECT PINAKA

With the formation of the Wawindaji came the need for the Upeo to begin looking into combat-purposed teleportation technology. Project Pinaka — in Hindu scripture a bow belonging to Shiva whose arrows cannot be intercepted — appears to have accomplished much in such a short period, but the secret to its success is coopting other Upeo technologies and projects and retasking them toward violent goals.

Project Pinaka's most noteworthy achievements so far are the Flickershield (p. 191) in personal and ship-borne variants, and the Diata bioVARG (p. 191). Upeo scientists began research into a teleport-capable VARG in 2110, well before the exodus. Initially this was an entirely peaceful project, a more durable frame for explorers to take to potentially hostile worlds. Taking inspiration from one of the most lethal native predators of Ruan's World, Project Pinaka refined Teleportation Helm technologies to link pilot and bioVARG in a reflexive partnership beyond that of other vehicles. Diata pilots feel like they're tapping into their feral instincts as the bioVARG becomes a noetic extension of their body and abilities. Diata pilots show increased aggression for several hours after leaving their VARG but, so far, psychological tests suggest this is a temporary condition without permanent influence on their psyche.

To better combat the Chromatics, the Diata were further refined to excel at striking photokinetic aliens. Though the Diata are Scout VARG's, they're heavily armed with physical projectiles and melee weapons — never electromagnetic-based armaments.

# FRIENDLY TRAVELERS

As the psi order responsible for bringing humanity to new extrasolar frontiers, the Upeo wa Macho are generally regarded positively throughout human space. Some organizations, however, are on better terms with the teleporters than others, and deserve special mention.

## ÆON TRINITY

Reintegrating an entire psi order that had fled into self-imposed exile would have been an insurmountable logistical task for the Upeo wa Macho alone. The Æon Trinity was there to welcome them back. Diplomatic and political experts from Neptune Division were crucial to the smoothing of ruffled feathers caused by the departure of the teleporters, and the Trinity assisted with generous loans to help the order recover from the significant financial losses it suffered when it disappeared without an apparent trace for nearly a decade.

In return, Proxy Atwan has made it clear Upeo members are to make themselves available whenever Æon requires their assistance, assuming diverting from their duties won't result in harm or loss of life. Presently, the Æon Trinity is the only party to whom the Upeo sells the new Karwe Class jump ship, and the Nguzo have brought in Æon researchers on many of their large-scale projects.

## ISRA

If there is one psi order the Upeo trust implicitly, it is ISRA. This trust has existed between the two proxies for

years. Proxy Atwan aided Proxy Herzog in the construction of Huruf Al-Hayy and remains the only person outside of ISRA to know where it is located. Officially, the clairsentient order has not made a statement on if they knew the Upeo were planning to leave Earth. Many have suspicions, and there are those within the two orders and without who feel ISRA knew what was coming and chose to remain silent. The truth to this is known only to those powerful clears within ISRA.

Still, the allegiance between the two orders remains. While they have different interpretations of the ways a psi order should work together for humanity, both organizations are benevolent. Furthermore, the two share a deep connection with similar noetic theories – clairsentience and teleportation are often viewed as related by philosophers of psi power.

The Upeo need clairsentients to function in their optimal capacity as explorers, and all orders find teleportation useful. To this end, requests from ISRA for access to the teleportation Prometheus Chamber are given priority over other outsiders, in the hopes the Upeo can keep their relationships with ISRA at an ideal level of cooperation.

## ÆSCULAPIAN ORDER

The boosters aren't the Upeo's closest relationship, but they are who the average member of Upeo admires most. The Æsculapians' humanitarian goals resonate with jumpers who want to usher humanity towards a brighter future, especially those in the Mwitu, who combine teleportation and rescue operations, and house most of the Upeo vitakinetics.

Since the return from Ruan's World, several Upeo teleporters have left the order and joined the Æsculapians, and more have expressed interest in mutual operations. While losing teleporters is never ideal, Proxy Atwan prefers teleporters join orders such as the Æsculapians than alternatives. She also hopes this will foster a greater sense of community and cooperation between their two orders.

## EDEN

Explorers from Upeo wa Macho contacted the nova-run colony of Eden nearly a decade ago, and despite the exodus, have remained in contact since. While relations between the psi order and the planet are cordial, there is still some lingering reservation among some of the psions, particularly those who have encountered Aberrants in less pleasant circumstances.

Bolade Atwan herself has visited Eden more than once, as an honored guest of Apollo, whom she admits is charming. The novas of Eden offered to accept any refugees who needed a new home when they learned the order left Earth. This was turned down — the Upeo were able to care for themselves, and their hiding the truth of Eden was a large factor in the order's requirement to flee. Still, during their isolation, Upeo - Eden relations remained positive, with members of the order visiting on occasion, though never revealing the location of Ruan's World. The fact that involvement with the Aberrants of Eden had given them knowledge of Karroo Station and the Chromatics was already a possible source of conflict between Earth, the Upeo, and Eden.

Having strong relations with Eden has had a dramatic impact upon the Upeo. Now the order has returned and reintegrated with Earth, awareness of their ongoing contact with the Aberrant colony generates an undercurrent of suspicion from the other psi orders. The teleporters hope to be able to leverage this alliance with the Edenites into a beneficial reconnection for all of humanity but are aware there is no guarantee this will happen.

## UNITED AFRICAN NATIONS

The Upeo believe in the benefit of all humanity, but humanity is not yet a united front in 2123. As the home of the order's terrestrial organization, as well as the birthplace of Proxy Atwan, the United African Nations have always had close ties with the Upeo. While it is from the UAN that Bolade receives some of her harshest criticism, it remains the earthly headquarters of the order. Her company, Kusafiri Ukomo, remains a large employer in the civilian sector. Swahili is spoken by almost all members of the order, and while the order has members from most human nations — and colonies — many consider the Upeo wa Macho the African psi order.

## UNITED NATIONS

Upon the return of the Upeo, Bolade Atwan had a series of difficult meetings with the UN. She turned over the order's information on Eden and made certain concessions around oversight to bring the Upeo back to their true calling — the expansion and protection of humanity. While some in the order feel she may have gone too far in capitulating to the UN's requests, Proxy Atwan feels that accepting responsibility for what has occurred is the quickest path towards resuming their vital mission.

# RIVALS AND THREATS

The Upeo we Macho do not seek enemies. This does not mean everyone they encounter will be a friend. To travel is to meet new people, and to meet new people is to expose yourself to a variety of opinions. Clashes are inevitable, either of ideology or arms.

## CHROMATICS

During their exile, the teleporters maintained secret contact with the residents of Karroo, providing them with aid and resupply when they were able. This clandestine presence of the Upeo on Karroo enabled the order to quickly deliver massive military support to the mining colony in the form of Edenite novas against the Chromatic raids.

While the Chromatics were a known threat, they were never considered more than a hostile alien species by the order, one of many existing in the vastness of the galaxy. The attack on Earth revealed the nearly 70 teleporters from the Lost Expedition of 2110 were the source of Chromatic travel. Though the Upeo only learned this after returning to defend Earth against the aliens, learning the secret of the aliens' teleportation redoubled the Upeo's anger and resolve.

While the Upeo wa Macho are dedicated to the peaceful exploration and colonization of space, even they can be pushed too far, and the Chromatics are considered the greatest enemy of the order. The Wawindaji chama was formed in response to the Chromatic threat, a force of anti-Chromatic warriors determined to rescue their missing allies. These Upeo do not wield laser weapons, aside from the potent electrokinetics they are working to recruit. The Wawindaji train exclusively with weapons that do not rely on EM radiation – sonic blasters, coilguns and blades forged with orbital grade titanium. Upeo wa Macho Science Division works to create bioapps to allow psions to combat these aliens while minimizing any advantages their photokinesis allows them.

Despite the justifiable anger many in the order hold toward the Chromatics, the official stance is they are not seeking revenge, but the rescue and return of their lost brothers and sisters. Members of the Upeo are some of those most eager to assist the United Nations in the proposed military action against the alien world of Chrome Prime. Several of the Upeo wa Macho's strongest teleporters have been attempting to scout the world, but none have been able to get to the planet itself, only making it to the outer reaches of the Chromatic's home star system. Should a task force ever be sent to Chrome Prime, it would likely be the largest Upeo mobilization since the exile.

## THE LEGIONS

The Upeo wa Macho and the Legions aren't enemies, but the Upeo's preferred peaceful approach to expanding humanity's horizons and potential is rarely compatible with the Legions' methods of killing problems through overwhelming firepower. Despite this, the two psi orders usually had a strong sense of alliance as their fields of expertise didn't conflict.

Since the Upeo's exile and return, relations between the two orders are frosty at best. Proxy Atwan resents how quickly Proxy Larssen called for the Upeo's sanction and full-scale military assault of Eden, while Larssen considers Atwan little better than an Aberrant sympathizer or cultist. Atwan's resentment has been further inflamed by the significant number of angry Upeo who rejected her guidance on returning to Earth, and instead of joining the Wawindaji, took up arms against the galaxy as part of the Legions. Ironically, these lower-rank friendships and connections between ex-Upeo and legionnaires has gone a long way towards convincing the Legions that although their proxy is misguided, the teleporters themselves aren't.

## MINISTRY

The Upeo has poor relations with the Ministry of Noetic Affairs. Their proxies don't trust each other, and most teleporters don't trust most telepaths. Proxy Bue Li was one of the first proxies to call for sanction against the Chitra Bhanu, and again for seizing control of the teleporters before they fled. Atwan hasn't forgotten the mad look in Bue Li's eyes that made it appear the woman wasn't in control of herself. In addition to this personal animosity, no other psi order is so beholden to a single nation, or that nation so keen to dominate all others. Distrust is not enough to prevent cooperation as the most effective human exploration and expansion relies on combined clairsentient-telepath-teleporter efforts. The Upeo still works alongside the Ministry towards this end, particularly as gaining access to new telepaths will be essential to the long-term growth of the psi order. The teleporters do not forget, but they are able to tentatively forgive.

## ORGOTEK

Where many Upeo hold a dim opinion of the Ministry for being part of a government, many have an equally poor view of Orgotek for being enthralled to another master — profit. The Leviathan jump ships, and the Tesser drive that enables them, are unquestionable boons to the entire species, but many in the Upeo feel they are a vanity project for Orgotek Proxy Cassel. While the Upeo never boasted large numbers of electrokinetics, the nature of the Chromatics has given the order greater reason to cooperate with Orgotek and smooth divisions between these orders.

## UPEO WA MACHO

The single greatest threat to the Upeo wa Macho in 2123 is the Upeo itself. During the exile, those who questioned Proxy Atwan's judgement grew in number and volume. Multiple factions within the order still whisper against order leadership. Some advocate publicly voicing their dissent, others agitate for a vote on new leadership. A few even quietly discuss the necessity of a forced change.

No one has yet made any serious attempts to remove the proxy — after returning to Earth, the teleporters are just as busy as ever before, even with the advent of jump ships. But a wound left untreated cannot heal. Attrition since their return is exceedingly higher than it was before, with many of the orders Nguzo and psions choosing to find alternative paths.

Some of those retired from the Upeo have formed their own small organizations or gone freelance. Foremost among these groups are the Star-Crossed, led by Rebecca Gould (p. 151). Formed as a legal business entity with registration in most PNs, the Star-Crossed sell their services, primarily to governments and corporations. The Star-Crossed are not purely mercenary however, and only accept jobs that do not dirty the conscience of their ten teleporters. They have dreams of someday absorbing the majority of Upeo personnel but are still working to solidify themselves.

### NOETIC CONNECTION AND THE PROMETHEUS CHAMBER

Teleporters gain a permanent Familiar noetic connection (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, p. 205) to their Prometheus Chamber, a side-effect of how the chambers inevitably impart something of themselves in genetically and noetically reengineering the psion.

As all teleporters share this link regardless of allegiance, it creates a security concern for the Upeo wa Macho. Before the return from exile, Proxy Atwan gave little thought to the noetic quirk — it was simply another common bond between all teleporters. Since returning to Earth and experiencing the schisms within the order and the number of jumpers who have left, she's had to rethink security. The Upeo have psi dampeners and teleportation blockers that would solve the problem, but these create other problems, namely, interfering with the Chamber's ability to successfully commence or complete the Prometheus Effect. For now, Atwan has had to content herself with bioapp monitoring for teleportation signatures within the Chamber's vicinity and setting guards with instructions to trigger the dampeners and blockers and call for help in case of emergency.

# PILLARS OF THE UPEO

The Upeo wa Macho offers immense freedom, but even the teleporters need to know where to go. The proxy, heads of the four chamas, and the chief operations officer guide the future of the psi order. Their opinions on the future of the order and the proxy vary greatly.

## BOLADE ATWAN

The proxy is uncomplicated in her outlook. She strives for the best for humanity and what is best for humanity is the continuation and freedom of the Upeo wa Macho. Everything Proxy Atwan does is towards these goals. Bolade has a pragmatic focus on what is before her and believes that while the future is important, it can't be built without actions in the present. She acts as she feels is right in the moment to secure the future of teleporters and stands by her decision to lead the jumpers into self-imposed exile. Despite the UAN media and politicians tagging the proxy with the smear *Bolade Ambaye Alikimbia* ("Bolade who ran") Atwan is no coward and is not afraid to make tough decisions. She doesn't care history may not judge her kindly, but she is saddened that so many within her order were quick to turn away.

Bolade devotes considerable energy to repairing the rifts between the Upeo, the other psi orders, and the world. She does what she can to hold the Upeo together, but Atwan knows she deliberately instilled individual freedom in service to humanity as a core value to the Upeo and must trust she taught her teleporters well. She hopes that over time they'll come to understand the difficult choice she had to make for their survival and return to the fold. If nothing else, she believes they'll agree to help when it's finally time to rescue their kidnapped siblings from Chromatic claws.

## BANJEET NANTAAL

Formerly an ambulance driver in the Bharati Commonwealth's Rawalpindi Metroplex, Banjeet was recruited in 2107 as one of the early latent teleporters. While he had considered joining the Æsculapian order, Proxy Atwan convinced him to keep his talents with the Upeo by offering him the opportunity to start humanity's premier rapid emergency response service in the Mwitu.

In his late 40s, Nantaal never obtained a medical degree though he has over a decade of practical experience. During exile was rarely able able to engage in field work, so now likes to ride along with new recruits as a mentor. Over fifteen years later, Banjeet remains loyal to the Upeo out of respect to Proxy Atwan and the opportunities she gave him, though he secretly ponders what good he could do elsewhere.

## ATIENO MWANGI

Born in 2060, the aging former UAN Colonel still cuts an imposing figure who commands respect. A veteran in the UAN Space Corps, Mwangi made a name for himself as a brilliant tactician and commander, having served in the defense of the Mount Kenya Space Elevator from inception until 2113, when he retired and pursued his noted latency as a telepath.

Colonel Mwangi isn't even a teleporter but is one of the Upeo's handful of telepaths. He served in the Nguzo, gaining distinction as a fleet coordinator and confidence from the proxy herself to take on kiongozi duties time and again across multiple projects. She tasked Mwangi with formulating a response to the Chromatic threat and the Wawindaji were the result.

While he would gladly lead from the front, Colonel Mwangi knows it is his job to delegate and command, not to be in the field. He takes immense interest in all the hunters under his command, trying to know each personally. As a military veteran who respects the chain of command and doesn't question orders, Mwangi is unbreakably loyal to both Proxy Atwan and the Upeo wa Macho.

## JENNIFER SHOJIKI

Among the earliest Upeo recruits, Jennifer Shojiki was brought into the order after spending her entire life on the run. A grifter, thief and con artist, Shojiki was bound to find herself in an FSA prison when she was detected as a latent teleporter in 2106. Since then, her free spirit, wanderlust and strength at Translocation have served her well as the Director of the Long Riders.

Jennifer was one of the Upeo who remained in constant contact with the various human extrasolar colonies during the Upeo exile and was never happy with the fact that the order abandoned much of humanity. Though always close to the Proxy, Jennifer has expressed disapproval to Atwan privately as well as to other Upeo. Wholly dedicated to the ideals of the Upeo wa Macho, her faith in Bolade shattered when she learned of the Esperanza attack too late for the Upeo to intervene.

## GERARD PORTOIS

Director of Kupita and perhaps the second most famous teleporter alive, Gerard was the very first latent recruited by Bolade Atwan and is closest to her equal in power. Portois was also the first person to join the Upeo wa Macho. When Atwan offered to trigger Gerard in the Prometheus Chamber, she did not make him promise to join her psi order. Instead, she trusted he would agree with her vision.

Formerly a nautical engineer living in the undersea city of Varuna, Portois saw dozens die in an accident he was too slow to prevent. Nearly twenty years later, Gerard still moves forward hoping to do enough good in his lifetime. Fully supportive of Upeo ideals, Portois serves as a bridge between Atwan and Shojiki. He knows the pressure within the order needs release, or it will explode with catastrophic consequences, and his support of one or the other will have major repercussions on the order.

## REN DAIYU

Technically, chief operations officer Ren Daiyu is not a director, but she effectively functions as such for the nguzo, and arguably outranks the chama directors though she's never had to challenge them on this. The daily operating realities and administration of the psi order fall to her authority unless countermanded by Proxy Atwan herself.

A talented and tenacious administrator, Ren chose to stay behind when the Upeo wa Macho fled to the stars. Ren endured countless hours of questioning from the psi orders and other authorities in the aftermath of the Upeo's disappearance, but as a neutral she simply couldn't do anything about the exodus. Even invasive telepathic probing only confirmed Ren's belief in the Upeo's eventual return was simply faith. Ren fought hard for Upeo assets and facilities and is the reason why the order had anything to return to on Earth. Many agencies tried to strip everything from the vanished psi order but intervention from Proxy Herzog helped Ren retain Usio and keep something of Atwan's transportation corporation alive.

# FORMER MEMBERS

Death, desertion, and demoralization have led to members of the Upeo wa Macho parting ways with the order. The following psions left the order for different reasons and to pursue different objectives.

## REBECCA GOULD

Compassionate and brave, Rebecca was an exemplary member of Kupita. Extremely skilled with Transportal, she was frequently called upon when large vessels needed to be deployed. Born in the Scottish Highlands, Gould had always longed to see the stars and her teleportation latency gave her both a means and a reason to do so.

From the beginning, Rebecca opposed the decision for the order to isolate from Earth. Angry at her order and their proxy, Rebecca spent much of her time during the exile accepting mission after mission, doing what she could to help those who she was still able to contact.

Returning to Earth with the rest of her order, Rebecca knew she would never allow this sort of betrayal of humanity to happen again. Along with nine other teleporters and a handful of other psions, Rebecca left the Upeo and founded the Star-Crossed to act as an eventual replacement to the psi order. A passionate and charismatic woman in her late 30s, Rebecca is careful not to directly antagonize her former allies while still pleading with them to abandon what she sees as a failed order and an incompetent proxy.

## KINJIA GOLD

Of Kenyan descent, Kinjia was born and raised on Luna. She had a pleasant life, her family together and happy living relatively close to the surface. When she was young, she knew she wanted to help others and she grew to become a social worker in Olympus. In 2113, she was discovered as a latent teleporter while assisting an injured psion receive medical services. Now having a rare opportunity, Kinjia joined Upeo wa Macho and served as a distinguished member of the order until 2122.

Kinjia left the Upeo following the psi order's return to Earth. Though bearing no ill will to her former colleagues, the devastation that occurred while the Upeo were away led to her disillusionment with Proxy Bolade Atwan. Rather than go mercenary, Kinjia has joined the Æon Trinity as a teleporting field operative able to assist in extrasolar operations.

# RUNNING AN UPEO WA MACHO CAMPAIGN

For Storyguides, an Upeo wa Macho campaign is an opportunity to stretch their creative and improvisational skill — no star is too distant and no border impenetrable. Even in its fractured state, the Upeo embodies **Trinity Continuum: Æon's** core themes of Hope, Sacrifice, and Unity. As a rule, the psi order is an organization dedicated to performing altruistic deeds for the benefit of humanity. Teleportation gives the Storyguide an opportunity to tell stories anywhere in the vastness of known space: from the slums of the FSA, to an undersea Oceanian City, to the most distant star systems. The teleporters know the distance between these points is an illusion, and so should you.

## STORIES OF TRAVEL

Running a game when characters can go anywhere at any time may seem daunting, especially to an inexperienced Storyguide. Where some campaigns can rely on a narrowly defined setting and regular cast of Storyguide characters, these supports can be taken away in a game where the characters not only travel so far but can do so at great speed. To those teleporting, the travel feels instantaneous, even if it

takes them hours to arrive at some location many lightyears distant.

Preparation and flexibility are your greatest assets as a Storyguide. Whenever possible, have multiple contingencies prepared. Keep a list of future Storyguide characters and where the players may encounter them. Even a list of names saved in a notebook or digital document can keep the story flowing when the team is suddenly in a new city in the blink of an eye. Keep these names multicultural and varied, as the world of 2123 has people from all backgrounds spread across the stars.

You do not need to link your stories and scenes to specific locations. If you have an idea for a scene in which the characters infiltrate a crime syndicate through carousing at a seedy bar, ask yourself is there any need for this seedy bar to be in a particular city, nation, or star system. If the answer is no, then adapt to where the characters take the story.

## TOUCHSTONES

While a group of Upeo wa Macho psions will likely have one or more teleporters, capable of whisking the player characters to the far reaches of space, remember they can just as easily return. An Upeo team based in Freedom can take on assignments on Earth, Karroo, or any other extrasolar colony and return to Freedom when their jobs are done. To the subquantum nature of teleportation, a commute to the stars is no farther than a commute downtown.

If the team are frequent travelers to a specific destination or destinations, invest time in detailing these. A group of Long Riders with a stable circuit will begin making connections with characters at each world they visit. Use these characters, and the specific locations they inhabit, to bring unique and specific sections of the galaxy to life for your players.

## FREEDOM

If you are running a campaign focused on the Upeo wa Macho, there is an assumption that the characters in the game will be free to move about the setting of **Trinity Continuum: Æon**. Even if none of the characters are teleporters themselves, they have more ready access to teleportation than any other human organization, and they are likely to rely on it.

Denying the characters the ability to teleport, then, is likely to result in hurt feelings and confusion. While it is interesting to impose difficulties on the group travelling at dramatically interesting moments, overdoing this will frustrate the players. Even during their exile, the teleporters readily travelled the surface of Ruan's World and visited other human colonies, even making trips to Eden.

## TYPES OF UPEO CAMPAIGNS

Exploration is a common theme of an Upeo wa Macho focused campaign. The characters could all be part of Kupita, seeking out new planets to visit and learn about the universe through direct interaction with it. This frees the Storyguide to make up entire worlds for adventurers to experience, each with unique stories to tell. The dangers and wonder of space exploration are ripe material for a game such as this.

A game could be the story of a group engaging in first contact with a new sentient species. This team will probably not travel as much, but they will be among the first humans to speak to and interact with a new alien race. This sort of campaign allows for tense confrontations, as well as unique challenges for the players. Simply establishing communication could be the focus of a story. Slowly exploring a mystery and expanding the world gives this type of game interest and depth.

While not as famous as the Æsculapian Order, the Mwitu of the Upeo are dedicated to saving lives across the galaxy. A game about a team of Mwitu characters provides a chance to be heroic, to run (or teleport) directly towards danger and save lives. And while the obvious challenges to these characters will be physical danger and the mental knowledge needed to save lives and deal with their own stress, there is ample opportunity for tense social standoffs and negotiations with local authorities. When people are dying, are these psions going to stay back and do nothing because the police say so? Do psions respect Nippon's neutrality when a major earthquake damages a major part of the arcology nation, or do they damn the consequences and help anyway?

While they operate in similar ways to the Mwitu, the Wawindaji hunters have different goals. If the Mwitu are paramedics and firefighters, the Wawindaji are SWAT teams and special forces. This is the sort of Upeo wa Macho campaign to likely involve frequent combat, whether with Aberrants, human criminals, Chromatics, or other hostile alien forces. Unlike most orders, and particularly the Legions, the militant arm of the Upeo don't have an abundance of backup or

heavy support. The Wawindaji are a precise instrument, able to insert and exfiltrate better than almost anyone in the galaxy.

Finally, the Long Riders tell more personal, character driven stories. These games could be stories of the characters making discreet supply and aid runs during the Upeo exile, or more open games set after their return. Here, the connections the characters make on the worlds they visit will be just as important and intriguing to them as the unseen vistas of an alien world would be in another game.

## AN ORDER DIVIDED

Regardless of what sort of campaign you decide to tell, the Leviathan in the room remains. While they are the smallest (known) remaining psi order, the Upeo are fractured. If the primary plot of the game doesn't involve the various cracks formed within the order, it is still useful for the Storyguide to know where each of the player characters and major Storyguide characters within the order place their loyalties. Some may be loyal to the order and Proxy Atwan, while others may be loyal Upeo but feel Bolade has broken their trust. Regardless of their personal views, it is entirely possible they will have to pick a side sooner than later, and each passing day brings the ability to remain neutral closer to ending.

A campaign about the schisms within the order can be run with as positive and upbeat a tone as any other. It is possible to present the different factions within the order, those who are pro-Atwan, anti-Atwan, and even in favor of disbanding the order and replacing it with a new one, as good. While every organization is made of people, and those who had been in the Upeo before they left have had some unique experiences and trauma, those that have joined this particular psi order did so because they wanted to help others. Regardless of how they feel about the future of the psi order, they most likely feel the way forward is one that will help the most people in the best way.

## Repercussions of the Exile

Storyguides and players may wish to explore a darker reality brought about by the Upeo fleeing Earth in 2116. Without contact, governments could have declared the departed psions and Nguzo legally dead. Any businesses or assets they may have had, including Proxy Atwan's company Kusafiri Ukomo, would have been taken over by other parties. On a personal level, family and friends would have no way to know if their loved ones were safe. For every happy reunion when the jumpers returned, there was the possibility of a spurned lover, dead parent, or a disappointed child.

The setting's default is the world in mostly forgiving of the Upeo for the exile. Proxy Atwan, with assistance from the Æon Trinity and United Nations, gets most of the legal situations smoothed over. The public accepts the Upeo back and they immediately set themselves up to perform good deeds for all to earn back lost trust. But the personal drama, the minutiae, and traumas, provide plenty of material for groups who wish to explore it.

# New Paths & Edges

Upeo wa Macho personnel have several unique advantages, including special teleportation techniques. The Upeo wa Macho Path in **Trinity Continuum: Æon** (p. 178) provides a solid core for the order, with the Paths below further exploring the specialization of each chama.

## Paths

### Nguzo (Society)

Nguzo are the backbone of the Upeo wa Macho, neutral humans, Talents, latent psions, or even psions of non-Teleportation Aptitudes. The Nguzo are equal to the other chama, and the psi order depends heavily upon them to be the pillar their specialists stand upon.

**Path Concepts:** Logistical Manager, Xenodiplomat, Idealistic Soldier

**Example Connections:** Asteroid Miner, Astrophysicist, Qin Diplomat

**Skills:** Command, Enigmas, Science, Survival

**Edges:** Always Prepared, Big Hearted, Direction Sense, Dual Citizenship (Ruan's World), Emergency Transit, Garden, Library (• to •••), Ms. Fix-It, Skilled Liar

### Long Rider (Society)

The elite couriers of the Upeo, able to step between continents and worlds with ease. Rugged individualists, a Long Rider's judgement and character are just as important as their ability to teleport.

**Path Concepts:** Psion on the run, Modern vagabond, Compassionate Messenger

**Example Connections:** Colonial administrator, Survivalist, OpNet technician.

**Skills:** Athletics, Culture, Humanities, Survival

**Edges:** Adrenaline Spike, Detached, Direction Sense, Dual Citizenship (Ruan's World), Emergency Transit, Garden, Nomad, Photographic Memory (• to •••)

### Kupita (Society)

Always seeking more to uncover, those within Kupita are the primary explorers of the Upeo. Seeking out new worlds and exploring them, the psions of this chama are trailblazers who lead by example.

**Path Concepts:** Jump ship navigator, Fleet teleporter, Xenoarcheologist

**Example Connections:** Scientific rival, Astronomer, Qin diplomat

**Skills:** Enigmas, Pilot, Science, Technology

**Edges:** Adaptable (•••), Always Prepared, Fearless Explorer, Danger Sense, Dual Citizenship (Ruan's World), Emergency Transit, Favored Mode, Garden, Low-Gravity Adaptation

### Mjitu (Society)

The wolves of the Upeo wa Macho are brave and selfless, rushing to the aid of others without fear or hesitation. These emergency personnel thrive in danger and live to serve.

**Path Concepts:** Thermokinetic firefighter, Rescue specialist, Telepathic EMT

**Example Connections:** UN Surgeon, Æon Trinity organizer, Local authority

**Skills:** Athletics, Integrity, Medicine, Survival

**Edges:** Adrenaline Spike, Always Prepared, Big Hearted, Dual Citizenship (Ruan's World), Emergency Transit, Favored Mode, Garden, Iron Will, Swift

### Wawindaji (Society)

Those who seek peace must prepare for those who do not. Part special forces, part intelligence operative, those who join the Wawindaji must be aggressive, assertive, and determined.

**Path Concepts:** Aberrant hunter, counter-terrorism expert, space marine

**Example Connections:** Æon Agent, Xenobiologist, Legionnaire

**Skills:** Aim, Athletics, Close Combat, Larceny

**Edges:** Any one Style Edge (• to •••), Covert, Detached, Dual Citizenship (Ruan's World), Emergency Transit, Favored Mode, Garden

## Edges

### Garden (••, Upeo Wa Macho Only)

Upeo members are granted a 1000 square meter plot of land in the city of Freedom on Ruan's World. Purchasing this Edge represents a significant investment of time and resources into your Garden. When purchasing this Edge, choose an Arena. Your Garden is tailored to this Arena – perhaps a training gym or dojo for Physical, a small library or lab for Mental, a meeting house or club for Social. Characters gain 9-Again for rolls in that Arena during any Session in which they have visited their Garden. While within their Garden, this bonus increases to 8-Again.

If the character is a psion or psiad, they always have a Material Connection to their Garden.

### Fearless Explorer (•)

Inside you beats the heart of an explorer, eager to see what lies beyond the next hill or distant star. The drive to uncover what lies out there drives you ever onward. Ignore up to 2 points of Complications for exploring a new area, whether physical impediment, social pressure, or intellectual challenge.

### Nomad (••, Upeo Wa Macho Long Riders)

Like travelers of ages past, you long for the open road beneath your feet. Rather than walking the miles literally, you are always on the move. Your Psi trait is considered 2 dots higher when calculating Transit Time and cooldown (**Trinity Continuum: Æon page 253**). This has no effect on dice pools or other factors related to Psi trait.

### Touchstone (••, Teleportation Aptitude)

While a wanderer, you maintain a sense of home and are better able to return to where you feel safe. This Edge grants the character a permanent Material Connection to a location. This location is one of import to the character, though it may not be one they have a positive opinion of — a site where they suffered a great loss is as likely to impose a connection as a happy childhood home.

CHAPTER NINE
PSI POWERS

"...like shapes in your mind that have an effect on the physical universe."
Ben Aaronovitch, *Broken Homes*

Humanity yearns to understand the universe. Humans are rarely content to accept that fire is hot, and what goes up must come down. They want to understand why, to know the principles underlying the simple truths, and to figure out how to twist these truths to their advantage.

Psionics and the subquantum universe are no different. Since the public revelation of this new frontier nearly 20 years ago, humans have wanted to know more about this power and how it can serve their future. Leading this charge are those people with direct access to and control over the power — psions.

This chapter examines these explorations and how the psions and psi orders push the limits of their known potential to manifest new, strange, and powerful effects, or boost themselves to rival the rumored might of the novas of old.

# APTITUDES

The division of psionic studies into Aptitudes and Modes isn't merely a human imposition over a universal phenomenon. Psi divides itself along these lines, operating like a spectrum where different aspects flow into each other at defined wavelengths. The focus of each Aptitude is specific, both in its gross and sublime manifestations (p. 158), but how the focus manifests for individual psi users or psionically active species can enact effects that appear similar or overlapping, and in some cases do produce the same outcome regardless of the means of its production.

One example commonly cited by psionic researchers is the boosting of mental acuity in an individual. Biokinetics, electrokinetics, telepaths and vitakinetics can all increase the mind's processing speed and enhance capability. While this has the appearance of the same effect, the workings underpinning each manifestation differ. Vitakinetics improve the performance of biological nerve cells, telepaths improve the unconscious processing frameworks, electrokinetics improve the speed and efficiency of electrochemical communications between cells, and biokinetics remap their neural networks in ways alien to

## EYEBALLING POWER EFFECTS

Several systems in this chapter deliberately require some work on the part of players and Storyguides. The effects of different dot ratings within a Mode can overlap at the edges, and some Modes or Aptitudes may be more efficient than others at producing certain outcomes at different levels. Players can even invent effects that clearly belong within an Aptitude's sphere of influence, but without clarity around which Mode is best placed, or what dot rating it should be.

When adjudicating these situations, Storyguides can consider the following advice. First, follow what's appropriate to the narrative's subgenre and err on the side of what makes sense. Accomplishments are harder to realize in gritty cyberpunk than in interstellar space opera, and the Storyguide can decide characters need higher dot ratings to accomplish a given effect in cyberpunk than in space opera.

Second, the Storyguide should be consistent in their decisions. Regardless of whether an effect requires higher or lower dots within a Mode, others manifesting the same or similar power with the Mode should experience the same advantages or limitations.

Finally, have fun. When in doubt, default to letting the characters use the cool powers their players chose **Trinity Continuum: Æon** to enjoy. Psions should be awesome — it'll make the game more enjoyable for all.

the evolved human state but better able to process the tasks before them.

As much as psi has any direction or control, it doesn't concern itself with outcomes. The psion focuses on the effect, psi is the tool. A builder driving a screw through timber might use a powered drill, a handheld screwdriver, or their fingers. The result is (theoretically) the same, but certain methods make the task easier than others.

## Aptitudes — Gross and Sublime

Human psionic research has realized Aptitudes encompass more than the easily observable expressions of their Modes. To Joe Hologram, the spheres of influence for each Aptitude are obvious. Biokinesis changes the psion's form, telepathy reads and influences minds, psychokinesis controls heat and kinetic energy, and so on. Even many psions or other psionically active species don't see beyond these superficial manifestations.

However, these obvious effects are manifestations of what researchers call the Aptitude's gross influences. Beyond these effects each Aptitude has a core concept that complements, enhances, and binds the Aptitude — its sublime influences. Paradoxically, even though these sublime influences underpin the Aptitude, psions rarely directly manifest them. Doing so can be difficult depending on the Aptitude, as some have more direct sublime influences than others. Psions most frequently experience these concepts when combining their Aptitudes with other psions, especially when creating effects beyond simple mechanical enhancement.

### Biokinesis

Holovid dramatizations and news cycles of the Norça and Sudamérican culture highlight Biokinesis' gross influence of reshaping of the psion's anatomy and physiology to facilitate survival, disguise, and chimeric weirdness. More than any other Aptitude, Biokinesis evokes alarming recollections of Aberrant Corruption and malignancies. Other Aptitudes manifest amazing and dramatic effects, but only Biokinesis has the potential to twist the body to something out of nightmare.

Potential is Biokinesis' sublime influence. A key difference between biokinetic and Aberrant is the psion always controls their potential. When a shifter decides to appear as a nightmare it's the choice of a human mind twisting the body, not corruptive energies twisting the human body and mind.

The bedrock of Biokinesis is the limitless potential in a living noetic template, even beyond what Vitakinesis and Telepathy can detect. Biokinesis gives rise to infinite ability to reshape the noetic template to incorporate new qualities and realize this potential. Biokinesis' Basic abilities reinforce these concepts, giving the psion awareness of the countless other noetic fields around him — from which he may take inspiration — and the knowledge of how to lock these potential changes into the psion's own noetic template. Its Modes further embody these ideas. Adaptation twists the psion's body in potentially extreme ways to preserve the individual against harm, including protection from environments and conditions that no biological creature should be able to withstand. Psychomorphing delves into possibilities of perfecting what it means to be human (or their own species, for alien biokinetics). Whereas Transmogrify explores what inhuman characteristics can bring to human existence.

### Clairsentience

Clairsentience carves a near unique niche among the Aptitudes by blending its gross and sublime influences more overtly in the direct manifestations of its Modes. Clears see reality as interconnected layers, with this connectedness representing both the gross and sublime nature of the Aptitude. The gross influences explore these connections as artifacts of time. Past, present, and future connect to drive the universe onwards. The movement of objects, where they were, and what interacted with them in the past dictates the present state of the world, and the decisions and actions we take inevitably cascade to reveal the future state. What was leads to what is and what may be.

Clairsentience's sublime influences move beyond the physical connections and into the ephemeral. What presence do emotional connections have in the physical arrangement of the universe? Love binds friends, family, and partners. Hatred drives enemies. Passion dictates obsessions. These emotions may have some physical component — lovers and families come together at times — but the connection between people endures beyond these physical contacts and shines bright to clairsentient vision.

Clairsentience's Basic abilities draw forth the gross connections, affording more insight and information through Attunement, at greater range. While many think the Clairsentience Modes simply follow the flow of time, their connection to the noetic totality and the blending of gross and sublime influences

is much deeper. Psychometry looks at connections between people, objects, and places to give a sense of the past, but also grants insight into what those locations and events meant to the people involved. Psycholocation adds meaning to present connections, finding the conceptual in the noetic totality, and finding new connections and locations from the idea of a type of location or object. Psychocognition focuses on the psion's path in the noetic totality and binds it to connections of conceptual importance. Being alert to danger, finding the best path, or highlighting those nexus points where so many connected significances come together are hallmarks of this Mode.

## ELECTROKINESIS

Many misunderstand Electrokinesis as merely a tool to move light and electricity. This represents the Aptitude's gross influences, working across the electromagnetic spectrum to interpret, change, or direct these energies, as well as directing the flow of electrons through conductive materials. This focus reveals the sublime influences of Electrokinesis. The nature of the Aptitude is control, beyond the simple manipulation of radiation or application towards photon or electron flows. Control of EM energies, control of their flow through materials, control of complex systems, the mechanics of how they work, and the outputs generated by these workings. Electrokinesis' Basic abilities give the psion awareness of the energies around her and draws them in, making the psion a convergence ready to direct and control the flows as she wills.

The Modes demonstrate this control. Electromanipulation views living flesh as biological machinery, understanding how it reacts to stimuli, how to overcharge its normal functioning, guide its movements, and bridge the gap between the living and the unalive. Photokinesis deals most directly with controlling the energies commonly associated with Electrokinesis; visualizing, modifying, focusing, and shaping the EM spectrum through psionic power. At the other end of the spectrum, Technokinesis manipulates storage and flow of energy through nonliving machinery. It deciphers information within

systems, controls their workings and bends function beyond their design parameters.

## PSYCHOKINESIS

Psychokinesis' effects are obvious and dramatic. To Joe Hologram, the Aptitude's fire, ice, telekinesis, and forcefields all focus on energy of movement. Simplistic explanations ascribe the effects to kinetic energy — which is certainly part of the Aptitude — but this simplicity overlooks the Perikinetic powers that shield against more than just fast-moving objects.

At the gross level, Psychokinesis explores movement and flow, from the macro scale of large objects through to the level of molecular vibrations. By manipulating subquantum flows, Psychokinesis shapes, directs, or blocks energies with no more physical form than subatomic particles or frequencies and wavelengths. However, the direct, visual spectacle of psychokinetic powers belies the subtlety of the psionic control underlying these effects.

Psychokinesis' sublime influence is power. Psychokinetics exert this power in defying universal physical laws, blocking heat transfer, imparting motion on the inert or stripping energies from bodies in motion. The Aptitude shapes the unseen, defies gravity and thermodynamics, and at extreme levels can even lock the psion away from all universal influences until she chooses otherwise.

The psychokinetic power suite supports these themes. Basic powers allow the psion to touch and feel objects from afar by unconsciously understanding how their atomic motions combine to give rise to solid, liquid, or gas, or to defy physical universe laws and impart directed kinetic energy to those objects giving rise to movement without force acting upon them. Thermokinesis targets molecular motion to add or subtract heat without care of physical laws requiring the heat to come from somewhere or spread beyond the area or object. Telekinesis moves objects both living and inanimate, imparting force from no more than the psion's will and the subquantum, while Perikinesis slows or redirects the motion of matter or energy, builds conduits and tools of pure force, even allowing the psion to filter the material and immaterial through precise control of their flows through a point.

## QUANTAKINESIS

So many people remember Quantakinesis as the Aptitude that boosted psi or suppressed Quantum — and vice versa — that they forget its influence over energy and matter, and the creation and destruction of both. Quantakinesis' gross influences are remarkable, violating physical laws with impunity. Changing the properties of matter, generating impossible forms that shouldn't be able to exist, creating various energies from nothing or unmaking them are all available to quantakinetics and are arguably more awe inspiring and alarming than making Aberrants even more powerful. Quantakinesis even touches upon the conceptual, with psions able to reassemble — even recreate — objects from associating the idea that the whole knows the sum of its parts.

In these things, Quantakinesis reveals its sublime influences as the interface between states. It divides the universes of quantum and subquantum which underpin everything and is the boundary between manifestation of energy and matter. Quantakinesis creates from apparent nothingness and destroys utterly. It influences the waxing and waning of powers, dampening or empowering psi or quantum. The Quantakinetic Basic powers start from this foundation, attuning the psion to the flow of power manifestations and allowing her to shift how others perceive her own power.

The Modes further explore these interfaces. Energetics converts, creates, or destroys energy, even altering properties or energies' interaction with matter in defiance of physical laws. Fundamentals bridges the gap between the subquantum and Quantum realities, bringing the two into synergy and balance or exacerbating the incompatibility and imbalance. Transmutation delves into the properties of matter, rewriting the laws of what it means to be solid, liquid, or gas, the properties of materials, or creating something from nothing.

## TELEPATHY

Ask anyone and they'll tell you — Telepathy focuses on the mind. Telepaths read minds, link people into thought gestalts, alter and implant memories, and calm or inflame emotions. Jane Hologram easily understands, categorizes, and judges Telepathy's gross influences without ever having encountered a telepath. The only true privacy is within one's own head, and Telepathy takes even that away.

However, Telepathy is more than just twisting emotions and memories. The Aptitude's sublime influences are of the conceptual, of thought and will, identity and self. Telepathy knows physical hands can never grasp or hold the reality of the concept. To do so requires a living anima — a spirit or soul — to generate or contain. Telepathy delves into that which is intangible even

to other Aptitudes. The Aptitude recognizes minds and identity are not the sole province of humanity, or even aliens with their own kinds of flesh and blood. Telepathy finds the commonality within the core of individuality that exists in all thinking beings, as evidenced by the Aptitude's Basic powers. Sensing the presence of intangible minds around her and opening connections to those, sharing her thoughts with others, are the foundations of Telepathy's explorations.

The Modes shape this esoteric ideal through emotion, thought, and self. Rapport taps into the zeitgeist of feelings. The raging anger of a street mob, the collective laughter in a theatre, and the shared loss at a funeral are all tangible and contagious ephemera under Telepathy's province. Mindshare finds the self, hidden beneath the physical, the pilot within every flesh suit watching the world through the windows of the eyes. It brings unity to these minds, linking them and laying bare the secrets everyone keeps tucked away. In contrast, Psychbending reveals the flimsiness of the intangible. To this Mode minds are a plaything to direct, mold, or splinter, like a biokinetic warps flesh.

## TELEPORTATION

In some ways the inverted reflection to Clairsentience, Teleportation also blends its gross and sublime influences more overtly through its Modes. The Aptitude explores the connectedness as concepts of space and distance, rather than associations of time. Teleportation considers space, the perception of separation between objects or defined points, and the illusion of distance projected on the physical universe by the subquantum. The Aptitude reduces the concept of distance to one of position, and the ability to choose to alter that position through psi. Gross uses of Teleportation relocate things with barely a ripple in reality, but the sublime influences can twist, stretch, and fold the illusion of distance and reality of position to warp the fabric of space-time.

Teleportation's Basic powers reinforce these concepts. While distance is an illusion and all space is one, individual psi has limitations of how much of everything it can decipher at once. When the psion appears to gain absolute awareness of the position of everything around her, she subconsciously maps the locational coordinates underlying the illusion. She senses alterations in these coordinates like notes on a file and interferes with other teleportation or warping by locking away editing privileges over those coordinates she can sense.

Translocation reinforces the illusory nature of location for the individual psion, rapidly moving her between coordinates, allowing exploration of the apparently furthest visible stars, even acting in multiple locations at once. Transmassion follows a similar path but works on the psion's understanding of the interaction of space and noetic templates beyond the instinctive manipulation of her own. At higher levels, this Mode imparts understanding of how even noetic wholes are comprised of myriad systems and coordinates. Transportal most directly demonstrates oneness by overlapping different coordinates, via windows at lower levels of power, or directly at higher levels.

## VITAKINESIS

Much like Psychokinesis, the widespread presence and benefits of vitakinetics has given the public an easy understanding of this Aptitude's effects. Everyone knows Vitakinesis heals. Any who have watched an OpNet vid of docs performing emergency response and rescue knows the Aptitude also boosts human strength and resilience. Some, mostly those on the receiving end, know that Vitakinesis also harms. Restoring, boosting, and stripping life's strength are aspects of Vitakinesis' gross influence.

In contrast to Biokinesis' influence over potential, Vitakinesis' sublime influence takes perfection as its domain. Perfection within the boundaries of what exists, without looking beyond the confines and incorporating the new or strange. The sublime Vitakinesis ignores life as it is — messy, flawed, and imperfectly replicating to survive into the future — and pushes it to be as perfect as it can. Vitakinesis brings forth inherent noetic potential and sustains it away from random crude genetic recombination. The unchanging end state of noetic perfection also brings stasis and permanence as parts of the Aptitude's sublime influence, the perfection of all things to endure forever.

Vitakinesis' Basic powers stem from this unchanging perfection. Vitakinetics sense the strength of life around them as affirmation of the optimum state, with illness and injury marring what would otherwise be flawless. In contrast, the psion's power can steel itself against her own weakness, forever healing her injuries and removing imperfections within her noetic template.

The Modes pursue or invert the pursuit of perfection. Iatrosis removes changes to the individual's noetic template. While biological creatures carry their

## WHEN TO USE APTITUDE SHAPING

Aptitude shaping gives players the ability to shape their Aptitudes to manifest effects beyond the limited scope of its Modes — even beyond what creative Mode effects (p. 165) can achieve. Aptitude shaping effects must conform to the Aptitude's themes (pp. 158-162) but can blur the lines between what different Aptitudes can achieve. Aptitude shaping gives the broadest effects available to psions but sacrifice power for this utility. Aptitude shaping has higher Psi point costs and lower dice pools than other ways psions manifest their powers and has few ways of gaining Enhancement. If the desired effect fits under a Mode, players should consider using Creative Mode systems first.

own flaws, illness and injury are unacceptable insults to even the base level of imperfection. Augendis works to overcome these deficiencies, using psi to metaphorically rewire and improve the subject to the best they can be. Unlike many other Aptitudes, Vitakinesis includes its apparent antithesis with the Algesis Mode. This is deceiving, as Algesis completes Vitakinesis by understanding and incorporating that despite the psionic pursuit of perfection, life is inherently imperfect. The act of degradation and wear is paired with the potential of being alive, and life's only permanent end states are psionic transcendence to the sublime realms beyond the subquantum, or descent into the ultimate stasis of death's absence of life.

## APTITUDE SHAPING

Each Aptitude has a vast sphere of influence through its gross and sublime effects, even beyond the manifestations of each Mode. The effects presented in **Trinity Continuum: *Æon*** and even the Creative Mode effects in this book (p. 165) can't account for everything an inventive psion may try. Ultimately, as humanity moves forward with psionic experience, trial and error, and effort, psions will learn that every Aptitude is a sandbox with effects limited only by the Aptitude's influence and the psion's power. When a player has an idea to use her character's powers beyond creative expressions of the Modes but within the Aptitude's purview, she should look to employ Aptitude shaping.

As with other uses of psionic powers, Aptitude shaping involves the player rolling the character's relevant dice pool and spending successes to achieve the desired effect. To perform Aptitude shaping, the player spends 5 Psi points and rolls the character's Psi + lowest Mode in that Aptitude (including Modes with no dots). Exerting dominion over the universe carries risk, as Aptitude shaping can resemble the arrogance of Quantum powers rather than the elegance of psi. Psions suffer no negative effects except the loss of Psi points if the roll fails. However, if the player rolls a botch, the character suffers the Subquantum Backlash Status Condition (see nearby sidebar). If the roll succeeds, use the successes to generate an effect using the Creative Modes system (p. 166) with the following parameters:

- The effect must fall within the Aptitude's gross or sublime influences but need not accord to any existing Mode.
- The highest potential Mode dots equivalent effect is equal to the character's Psi trait or lowest Mode dots, whichever is less, to a minimum of one.
- Within the limit above, the player spends successes to purchase effect parameters as per the Creative Modes Effects table (p. 167). The player need not spend all successes.
- Most characters can only have a single Aptitude shaping effect active at any time. Proxy tier characters can manifest two Aptitude shaping effects simultaneously.

## SUBQUANTUM BACKLASH (STATUS CONDITION)

Your character pushed her power into areas humanity only begins to understand and has paid the price for her hubris. She adds half her Psi trait (rounded up) as Difficulty for her Psi power activation rolls and must pay an additional Psi point when activating any power, even those that normally have no cost.

**Resolution:** The character removes this Status Condition at the end of the session, or if gained late in a session (Storyguide's decision), at the end of the next session.

- Characters can't maintain Aptitude shaping effects indefinitely. After each period of the effect's Duration, the psion may pay an additional Psi point to continue the effect for another Duration period. All Psi points spent towards an Aptitude shaping effect count as committed — the psion may regenerate other Psi points, but if she continues to keep the shaping effect active she will eventually exhaust her reserves.

## SAMPLE APTITUDE SHAPING

Aptitude shaping pushes psionic powers to their conceptual limits and are limited only by the Aptitude's gross and sublime influences, but more importantly, the players' imaginations. The below examples are ideas to encourage players to bring their own ideas to the game.

**Biokinesis:** The psion alters her density and mass without altering her Size or shape. She can become lighter than air, allowing the winds to carry her along, or make herself heavier than lead and immovable without mechanical assistance.

**Clairsentience:** They say everyone has a perfect match, and the psion can find that person through the Aptitude's command of conceptual connectedness. This power use doesn't reveal why the match could work, nor does it guarantee that they're currently in the right stage of their lives to be a perfect match now.

**Electrokinesis:** The electrokinetic precisely controls the flow of energies through the environment to build a virtual computer that can replicate any non-physical task. With just a few of the right materials and manipulation of magnetic forces, the psion could even build something that overcomes physical limitations.

**Psychokinesis:** The psion channels raw power, transforming her flesh into living plasma surrounded by a Perikinetic forcefield. While in this form the psion can choose to burn items or not with her touch, is immune to gravity and most damaging energies, and can flow around obstacles or through barriers with a few centimeters clearance.

**Quantakinesis:** The quantakinetic targets the interface between states to link subquantum potentiality to the change. She builds psionic effects and links them to change triggers, ensuring they'll activate the moment the interface between alters. Incoming energies, melting solids, even the eruption of Quantum-potential baselines could activate the effect linked by the psion for the change.

**Telepathy:** The psion creates a zone that reinforces the concept of truth. More than just compelling people to speak truth, within this space falsehoods fall away, disguises falter, and deceptions are revealed.

**Teleportation:** The teleporter draws on physical connectedness between the body of a victim and his murderer to swap their locations, bringing the murderer to the crime scene and sending the corpse to wherever the assailant fled.

**Vitakinesis:** The vitakinetic defines a living creature's current noetic template as a moment of perfection. For a time, changes sit 'outside' the template, refusing to attach their consequences until the power ends. During this period, no damage, harm, or improvement can affect the creature, but once it ends all deferred changes rapidly take place.

## COMBINING APTITUDES

The rules for combining multiple Aptitudes in **Trinity Continuum: Æon** (p. 207-208) provide clear detail on the direct mechanical effects achieved when mingling psionic power. Those rules also refer to psions of differing Aptitudes being able to combine their abilities to take advantage of each Aptitude's specialties, and in doing so uncover new effects and ways of using psi. The guidance presented here helps shape some of the considerations of how players can combine Aptitudes in this way to deliver new outcomes. This system doesn't focus on additional successes or bonuses, rather, it provides

### PSIADS AND CREATIVE COMBINATIONS

Although psiads can't combine with psions to create or receive the same passive effects (**Æon Æxpansion**, p. 88), they can come together or with psions to generate combined effects, contributing their Aptitudes towards direction, access, or form if they possess sufficient dots.

Psiads can also generate similar effects by combining their own Aptitudes. Psiads working alone don't have to harmonize their noetic fields to attempt these effects, they're always considered to be in harmony with themselves.

guidance for players and Storyguides to understand the possibilities and limitations of combining Aptitudes to deliver new and interesting effects. The combinations produced here are also the gateways to groups of psions bringing forth the more subtle elements and manifestations of their Aptitudes and creating wondrous effects that draw upon the gross and sublime influences of each Aptitude.

## Noetic Harmony

Psions combining multiple Aptitudes can't receive mechanical bonuses to their standard Mode manifestations (**Trinity Continuum: Æon** p.208) at the same time they work together to generate a novel effect. The harmonies between each psion's noetic field require different focuses for each effect. Unless the psions linking their Aptitudes decide otherwise, their noetic fields default to the form automatically enhancing each member's powers in the standard format. If the characters later decide they want to manifest a different effect, they must spend one round reshaping their noetic harmonization to close off the usual, predictable connections, but open more fluid and flexible links. This shift doesn't require the characters to sever their existing connection — such as a Mindshare Network. All linked psions, either physically or via telepathy, must harmonize their noetic fields the same way. A subset can't reshape their connection for creative effects while the rest retain passive bonuses.

Characters can combine other reflexive or ordinary actions with this reshaping. Ordinary actions suffer +1 Complication per character linking their noetic fields. If the character fails to buy off this Complication the psionic connection wavers, requiring each connected character to spend an additional Psi point and another round before the harmony stabilizes. Most reflexive actions don't distract the characters in this way, unless they call for a dice roll, which suffers the same Complication and potential consequences as above.

## Direction, Access, and Form

When psions combine their abilities, each Aptitude takes on a role of direction, access, or form. Aptitudes delivering direction are those manifesting the primary effect. The example in **Trinity Continuum: Æon** (p. 207) of a biokinetic, vitakinetic, and clairsentient combining their Aptitudes to shapeshift another character at range helps demonstrate each of these roles, as detailed below. Aptitudes can play multiple roles in a combined effect, with characters requiring different minimum dot ratings in their Aptitudes depending on the roles they fill.

**Direction:** The Aptitude generating the primary effect takes the role of direction. All Aptitude combinations must have at least one providing direction but can have more. Characters providing direction to an effect must have sufficient dots in their relevant Modes to manifest the base effect.

> ***Example:*** *In shapeshifting a character at range, the primary effect is shapeshifting, which means the biokinetic takes a direction role and requires sufficient Mode dots to deliver the effect. If the psions wanted to shapeshift the character to survive the vacuum of space without a spacesuit, the biokinetic would need the Adapt power (Adaptation • • • • ). If the players instead wanted to superficially change the target's basic appearance, this would require a 1-dot Psychomorphing effect instead.*

**Access:** Many combinations require an Aptitude to contribute its access specialty rather than directly forming the main outcome of the effect. Vitakinetics allowing Biokinesis powers to affect individuals beyond the biokinetic themselves, or Clairsentience opening Vitakinesis effects to more than touch range.

Characters in access roles usually only need a single dot within the Aptitude to contribute to the effect, unless the access in specific to a particular Mode, in which case the psion needs a dot of what Mode, or it is unique to a power level within a Mode, where the character must have that dot rating or higher.

*Example: The vitakinetic is allowing access to the target's noetic template for the biokinetic to deliver the effect but isn't making the effect themself. All Vitakinesis Modes give access to living creatures' noetic templates, so the vitakinetic only requires a single dot in any Mode to contribute.*

**Form:** The final role an Aptitude can have in a combination is changing the delivery or shape of the effect in a way that is beneficial but isn't the core manifestation. Form can appear to overlap with access but is usually separate. The simplest way of determining whether an Aptitude is contributing access or form is to ask whether the psions could deliver the effect without the Aptitude, albeit probably in a different way. If the answer is yes, the Aptitude contributes form, not access. Unlike access, form usually shapes the final effect in ways consistent

with specific Modes or powers within a Mode. As such, the contributing character usually requires at least one dot in the relevant Mode (rather than a dot in any Mode), or more if the form comes from a power of higher dot rating.

***Example:*** *The psions intend to deliver the shapeshifting effect at range. The clairsentient's contribution provides this range, but the group without the clear could still deliver the core effect by touch. Therefore, Clairsentience gives form, not access, to this combination. However, seeing across distance in the present is an aspect of the Psycholocation Mode, therefore the clear must have at least one dot in that Mode. If the group wanted to link the shapeshifting effect to a trigger from the target's past, the clear would need a dot of Psychometry, whereas if they wanted the effect to occur when a possible future event occurs she would need a dot of Psychocognition.*

### COMBINED APTITUDES TABLE

| CONTRIBUTION | MINIMUM REQUIREMENT |
|---|---|
| Direction | Mode dots at least equal to intended power |
| Access | Dots in relevant Aptitude or Mode |
| Form | Dots in relevant Mode |

# MODES

Psions understand the progression of their Modes. From the moment the psion first unlocks the beginnings of a Mode — by purchasing the first dot — she has a sense of the potential opened before her. Even a beginner in a Mode feels the different effects available from one to five dots. She doesn't feel the sixth dot and beyond as anything more than a far-off yearning. She knows these effects exist and that they're out of her reach. But she also understands this is a temporary obstacle she can overcome with time and practice.

Further, while individual psions aren't aware of dot ratings, they innately know which effects within their Modes are 'comfortable'. Like someone taking the morning run they do every day, the psion knows what he can achieve with moderate effort but without straining. He also knows which effects he has surpassed and come easily to him, but also those he must push himself to achieve. In this way, and by having a fair understanding of how taxing manifesting different effects is to beginners or advanced practitioners, psi orders can test and gauge their psions' progression and ability in their Modes. How frequently they do so, and what accolades, qualifications, file notes, or other recognition they give heavily depends on the psi order.

## CREATIVE MODES

The descriptions listed with each dot are not the only effects available to each level of a Mode. The standard powers are common to almost every psion with the Aptitude and some psions never push themselves outside this comfortable progression. However, many psions feel other possibilities pulling at the edge of their psionic awareness. This is different to the vertical progression within the Mode, the safe path the psion can see before her which she can push herself to achieve with predictable effort. This is a sideways temptation, a feeling that there is more available to the left and right of what the psions knows. If the psion can break from the rigidity of

### MODES AND SPECIES

**Trinity Continuum: Æon** assumes every alien species follows the same progression of powers within the Modes they can access. This need not be the case. The powers listed could be an expression of humanity as told by psionic manifestation, whereas Qin, Chromatics, or other psionically active aliens may experience some differences. While it's unlikely an entire Mode would be different, with every dot giving a different effect to what a human would naturally manifest, it's possible.

Storyguides who choose to take this path must do the work to make the aliens and psionics their own. Use the rules here and in **Trinity Continuum: Æon** as guidance. Each effect should be no more powerful than those listed for each dot rating. The goal is to make the powers different and representative of the species, not more powerful.

## WHEN TO USE CREATIVE MODES

The Modes cover much of the conceptual space within their Aptitudes but the specific powers at each dot of a Mode impose limitations. Creative Modes allows characters to overcome these limitations. Players use creative Modes when they want an effect that fits within a Mode not covered by the standard powers.

standard teachings she can twist and form her psi into new and interesting shapes and manifest an amazing variety of effects.

### BREADTH NOT DEPTH

While Creative Mode manifestations open a wealth of possibilities to players, their effects are usually less efficient or powerful than the Mode's standard expression. This system encourages players to delve into their imaginations when inventing and describing effects, but the character's Psi trait and the dots she has in each Mode still limit the effect of the manifestation on other characters or the environment. Use the **Creative Mode Effects** table when determining the actual mechanical aspects of a power, regardless of its description. This doesn't mean Creative Mode powers can't have dramatic or spectacular appearance, just that this appearance may be more for show.

### CREATIVE MODE PARAMETERS

Creating a new effect requires creativity on the part of the player to describe what their character wishes to make. While the specifics of the power's appearance are up to the player (with Storyguide approval), Mode's generally have a hierarchy of effects they can achieve at each dot rating.

**The first dot of a Mode** usually gives access to sensory effects, personal defense, or minor control over the Mode's domain. This level can't produce targeted damaging effects but may be able to generate minor environmental threats (see *Other Forms of Damage*, **Trinity Continuum Core**, p. 108-111).

**The second dot of a Mode** gives improved control over the Mode's domain, allowing greater personal defense or reduced defense over an area. Biokinesis, Psychokinesis, and Vitakinesis can produce direct damaging effects at this dot rating, within their areas of influence.

**The third dot of a Mode** allows significant control over a single, directed effect or minor control over an area. It can create moderately complex media within the Mode's domain, or moderately hazardous environmental effects. Most Aptitudes can produce direct damaging effects at this dot rating.

**The fourth dot of a Mode** provides complete control over a singular effect (or near to it) or significant control of similar effects over an area. It can create complex media within the Mode's domain, highly damaging attacks, and extremely hazardous environmental effects.

**The fifth dot of a Mode** delivers complete control over multiple effects within an area. It can create extraordinarily complex examples of the Mode's domain — including otherwise impossible effects. Attacks at this level are devastating, defenses are near impenetrable, and environmental effects are deadly.

**The sixth dot of a Mode** can only deliver increased Scale effects. Characters with 6 dots (or higher) in a Mode can use this to access higher maximums for their creative effects (see Creative Mode Effects table, p. 167) but this level can't create variable effects like lesser dot ratings.

**The seventh dot of a Mode** is a personal expression of psionic development, manifesting conceptual effects that embody the gross and sublime influences of the Aptitude. Proxy level characters can use their control over the subquantum to fuel higher outcomes for creative uses of their 1-5 dot powers, but they can't directly manifest proxy-level powers this way. See *Proxy Level Powers* (p. 168) for more detail.

Beyond the descriptions above, the following limitations apply to Creative Mode powers:

- Characters can only manifest creative effects at their dot rating in a Mode or less.
- Characters can only generate creative effects for 1-5 dots of a Mode, even if the character possesses six or more dots in the Mode.
- Characters can't attempt creative effects with Auxiliary Modes.
- Characters with more dots than required in a Mode can choose to create an effect lower than her actual Mode dots or produce a lower-level effect with greater mechanical effect. These choices affect the cost and Difficulty of the attempted effect.

- Creative Mode effects can't overcome inherent limitations on Aptitudes. Biokinesis can't affect anyone except the psion herself (and her clones), Teleportation generally ignores Range but requires a noetic connection to function, and Vitakinesis powers only work with physical contact.

## Activating the Creative Mode Effect

To generate the creative Mode effect, the player rolls Psi + Mode dots as per normal psi power use (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, p. 206), with the following differences or stipulations:

- The Difficulty of the roll equals the dot rating of the attempted effect.
- The base cost is 1 Psi point per dot rating of the effect; some player choices may modify this cost.
- Players may choose to manifest a lower dot rating effect than the number of dots their character has in a Mode.
- Characters gain +1 Enhancement per dot they have in the Mode greater than the attempted effect.
- Players may choose to attempt a lower rated effect at a higher dot rating, up to the character's dots in the Mode. This gives access to greater mechanical aspects, but also increases the Difficulty and Psi point cost.

Refer to the Creative Mode Effects table (below) to determine the mechanical effects of the power. Creative effects begin at the 'Start' row — the player must spend successes to purchase effects beyond these.

**Mode Dots:** The number of dots the character has in the Mode, defining the limitations of the creative effect the character can produce. Characters can manifest effects lower than their maximum to reduce cost and Difficulty.

**Range:** The first purchase and maximum range available for the power. The first success spent on this parameter buys range equal to the first purchase value. Each additional success spent increases range by one step until maximum reached. This can't overcome inherent Aptitude limitations.

**Size:** The maximum number of Size Scale 'steps' the effect can take from the psion's own (unenhanced) Size. The player chooses whether this parameter increases or decreases the Size Scale of the effect.

**Duration:** How long the effect lasts without committing Psi points. The first success spent on this parameter buys the first purchase Duration. Each additional success spent increases Duration by one step until maximum reached.

## Creative Mode Effects

| Mode Dots | Range | Size | Duration | Radius | Enhancement | Armor | Difficulty | Targets | Edges/Tags |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Start | Touch | 0 | Instant | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Self | 0 |
| 1 | Touch/Close | 0 | Instant/Rounds | 0/Close | 1 | 1/2 | 1 | 1/1 | 2 |
| 2 | Touch/Short | 1 | Rounds/Minutes | Close | 2 | 1/2 | 1 | 1/2 | 3 |
| 3 | Close/Medium | 1 | Minutes | Close/Short | 2 | 1/3 | 2 | 1/3 | 4 |
| 4 | Short/Medium | 2 | Minutes/Hours | Short | 3 | 2/4 | 2 | 2/4 | 5 |
| 5 | Medium/Long | 2 | Hours | Short/Medium | 3 | 2/5 | 3 | 2/5 | 6 |
| 6 | Long/Extreme | 3 | Hours/Days | Medium | 4 | 3/5 | 4 | 2/6 | 8 |
| 7 | Extreme | 5 | Days | Medium/Long | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4/10 | 10 |

**Radius:** The distance around the psion where the power affects everyone within the area. The first success spent on this parameter buys the first purchase radius. Each additional success spent increases radius by one step until maximum reached.

**Enhancement:** The maximum Enhancement the power can generate, costing one success per +1 Enhancement. This Enhancement almost always applies to a specific Skill or action type, but some Aptitudes boost a range of actions at once.

**Armor:** The first armor purchase value the power can generate and the maximum armor, whether Soft or Hard armor, or a combination. The first success buys armor equal to the first purchase value, while each additional success spent increases armor by one until reaching the maximum value.

**Difficulty:** The maximum Difficulty or Complication the power can impose on a target, purchased at +1 per success spent. The player should define what happens if the target fails to buy off the Complication.

**Targets:** The first purchase and maximum number of targets available to this power. The first success spent buys the first purchase target value. Each additional success spent increases the number of targets by one until reaching the maximum number of targets.

**Edges/Tags:** The maximum number of Edge dots or positive Tags the power can simulate. Each success spent buys one dot of Edge or point of Tag.

### Learning from Experience

Players should record details of the creative effects invented by their characters. Manifesting creative psionic powers brings familiarity with the metaphorical shape of the power for the character. This also makes it easier to manifest that creative effect in future, possibly even eventually becoming rote.

Attempting the same creative effect again reduces the Difficulty of manifesting it by one, to a minimum of Difficulty 1. This must be precisely the same power with the same system effects, otherwise it counts as a new creative mode manifestation. As well as the reduced Difficulty, each time the character manifests this power the player may spend a point of Experience towards it. This isn't required; the character may have no free Experience, they may wish to save the Experience for another investment, or the player may not care for the outcome of the effect. Once the player has spent Experience equal to the creative effect's dot rating the character learns how to incorporate that effect into their Modes and manifest it by rote. The character reduces the power's Psi point cost to its Mode dots/2 (round up), and thereafter uses the normal psi power activation rules (**Trinity Continuum: *Æon***, p. 206) for that effect.

## Proxy-Tier Powers

Proxy-Tier powers are unique among the lessor Mode forms. They are simultaneously individual expressions of psionic exploration and a testament to a species' impact on the subquantum. When the proxies talk about their early experiences, they all share similar feelings of both creating their highest powers while also discovering what was waiting for them. Humanity is not alone in this discovery. Humans are rare in having the potential to rapidly reach proxy-Tier heights of psionic power, albeit with intervention leapfrogging their development several centuries or millennia to do so.

Developing proxy-Tier powers is an early step in a species' psionic development and evolution towards transcendence to realms beyond the subquantum. Humans have taken the first step but still have much to discover. For a species, developing proxy-Tier powers paves the way for other members of the species to follow.

To say proxy-Tier powers are individual expressions of subquantum power is accurate. None of these powers exist by default, unlike the progression of Modes from one to six dots. A psion of required power must meditate on their understanding of the subquantum, try new and interesting combinations, and work to create and develop their individual stamp on the subquantum. Through trial effort in this manner the character eventually develops a new proxy-Tier power.

However, these powers also mark the species' impact on the subquantum. Once a proxy invests the time, effort, and dedication to inventing a new power, other psions of the required Tier discover they can learn that power for less investment than the inventor. Much like an inventor of a technological wonder paving the way for others to then build or

purchase that wonder, the first member of a species to develop a proxy-Tier power 'unlocks' it for the rest of the species to follow.

Humanity hasn't yet realized this aspect of psionic development. As human psions are limited to a single Aptitude, and no humans besides the proxies themselves have yet reached the potential required, these individuals are currently alone in pushing forward the boundaries of psi and inventing new powers. When these people first became the proxies, they pushed themselves to develop their highest power levels and realized their first proxy-Tier abilities. Unfortunately, since bringing their psi orders public, few have had the time required to dedicate the effort needed to replicate this feat.

## INVENTING NEW PROXY-TIER POWERS

Players can invent new 7-dot proxy-Tier powers for their characters using the systems below. Additionally, proxy-Tier powers all adhere to the following guidelines.

- The player and Storyguide work together to agree that the power is suitable for the game, appropriate to the proxy-Tier power level, and fits within the Aptitude's purview.
- All proxy powers cost 10 Psi points to activate. Individual powers may incur additional Psi point costs after activation, depending on their effects.
- The character's Psi trait caps most aspects of proxy powers. For characters in the **Trinity Continuum: *Æon*** era, the maximum Psi trait is seven.
- Proxy level powers should demonstrate aspects of both the gross and sublime elements of their Aptitude. Use existing powers for inspiration and direction.
- Refer to the *Creative Mode Effects* table for guidance on effect parameters outside the Psi trait providing a numerical cap. In general, dedicated proxy-level powers go another step beyond the traits listed in that table.
- Developing a new proxy-Tier power costs 20 Experiences. Once the power is 'unlocked', other proxy-Tier characters can learn the power for 12 Experiences as per the table on p. 124 of **Trinity Continuum: *Æon***.

### DOYEN AND HUMAN PROXIES

With millions of years of psionic evolution and many of their species having had the requisite power for much of this time, the Doyen have a range of their own proxy-Tier powers they haven't shared with humanity. As a different species, Doyen can't directly share these powers anyway. They could guide the proxies in how to invent/discover these new powers — as they did with humanity's first proxy-Tier powers — but the aliens have many secrets they don't wish to share with their genetically engineered weapons.

Unsurprisingly, the Doyen cheat. While they don't share their psionic mastery with humanity, when the aliens directly genetically reconfigured the human proxies, they installed noetic backdoors into their templates. When one of the seven human proxies discover or learn a new proxy-Tier power it unlocks the potential for the Doyen to also learn it without the effort of inventing it themselves. This doesn't apply to lesser psions who underwent the generic Prometheus Effect, only the original proxies. The Doyen eagerly but anxiously wait for the first generations of human psions to reach the power required to discover new powers, and for their tools to learn these and pass them to the Doyen.

This effect never worked on Bhurano. Despite the Doyen's engineering, the aliens couldn't themselves learn Quantakinesis, nor could they gain access to the quantakinetic proxy-Tier powers. The moment Bhurano unlocked the secret to permanently destroying Doyen triggered the cascade that eventually saw the Chitra Bhanu destroyed at the hands of the other psi orders.

Building the new proxy-Tier power involves a complex action (**Trinity Continuum Core**, p. 77) with a number of milestones equal to the Mode dots of the intended power (at least 7 for proxy-Tier) and Difficulty to match. The time required for each milestone depends on how the character approaches the task. Characters able to dedicate constant attention to developing the power, exploring how their psi acts and feels by frequently using their structured and creative power uses and meditating on their own state of being to the exclusion of other activities can cover a milestone within a

session. Conversely, busy proxies with psi orders to run who have countless demands for their attention at any time can't manage to complete a milestone in less than a Campaign or even a Chronicle. Individual milestones can span different durations as the character's available time ebbs and flows. The Storyguide has final say on how long a milestone takes but should allow players to cover a milestone every 2-3 sessions if their characters devote reasonable time to the task.

Completing each milestone isn't an easy task. The character has a large dice pool, but Difficulty 7 is a high bar to overcome. Such are the challenges species must defeat in their march towards subquantum transcendence. Players should ensure the group has a healthy pool of Momentum (**Trinity Continuum Core**, p. 73) to supplement their rolls or purchase additional milestone rolls, as required.

Further, during each milestone period, characters can gain Enhancement toward succeeding. The list below provides several ideas, but these aren't the only ones. Each point provides the character +1 Enhancement to the roll. Players and Storyguides should work together to agree on other tasks or conditions to improve the character's chances of success.

- Manifesting Creative Mode powers that evoke the Aptitude's gross and sublime influences in ways consistent with the eventual power the player wants to create.
- Using formatted bioware that resonates with the Aptitude as a whole (such as IADs) or is consistent with the intended power effects.
- The character acts in ways that demonstrate her striving to push her limits and further develop her potential.

# PSIONICS AND SCALE

Most psions don't consider elements of Scale beyond the interactions with their powers. A psychokinetic understands how big an object he can move with his telekinetic powers, and how much this increases if he pushes himself further (that is, spends additional successes and/or Psi points). He understands how much effort he needs to expend to fly, and to fly faster, but he doesn't think about Scale beyond these inherent factors. (Obviously, the character doesn't think about the Storypath concept of Scale at all!)

For most psions, this is sufficient. They know the ways in which they can push their powers, and how far. Many experienced psions, especially those with an interest towards psionic research, also know of the more powerful psions on the cusp of transcendence into proxy levels of power, and how these rare individuals manage to drive their powers to greater heights and produce effects that awe their less experienced peers. In game terms, they are aware these characters possess six dots in at least one Mode.

However, it is possible for psions to access Scale with their powers outside the sixth dot of each Mode. Doing so is not easy or inexpensive, and few psions push themselves to breach the barriers of their own limitations. To do so, players have two methods to choose for their characters.

## PRE-PLANNING FOR SCALE

The first method involves the character knowing they want to push their powers beyond their limits before attempting to activate them. The player decides which parameter or parameters of the power the character is trying to boost and decides how much additional Scale they want to try and achieve. Characters can only increase the Scale of aspects a power uses, and psions can never increase the

### NOETIC FEEDBACK (STATUS CONDITION)

Like muscles pushed beyond their limits, your character pushed her power too far and now feels the strain. She suffers increased Difficulty on all her psi activation rolls equal to the number of levels of Scale she attempted to increase.

**Resolution:** The character removes this Status Condition after a number of scenes equal to her Psi trait.

combined Scale of their powers greater than their Psi trait. A character with Psi 3 could try to increase the Scale of one aspect of their power by three steps or could increase three aspects one Scale step each.

Having made this decision, the player pays an additional 2 Psi points per (total) step of Scale increase and attempts the psi power activation roll at +2 Complication per step of increase. Failing to buy off this Complication results in the power activating without the increased Scale. If the character doesn't generate sufficient successes to overcome the entire Complication, she can choose which Scale elements she does successfully generate. Regardless of success or failure, the Psi points are spent.

Increasing Scale isn't without risk. If the player botches the roll, the character gains the Noetic Feedback Status Condition (see nearby sidebar).

### Pre-Planning Scale Summary

- Decide which parameter(s) to attempt to boost, and by how much.
- Pay 2 Psi points per additional level of Scale attempted.
- Attempt psi power activation roll at +2 Complication per additional level of Scale.

## Taking Advantage of Opportunity

The second method of increasing Scale occurs after the character has activated a psionic power and achieved multiple successes. In addition to spending the successes according to the power's description, with sufficient successes the player can choose to take the opportunity to increase Scale. For every four successes the player spends, she can also spend four Psi points and increase the Scale of one aspect of the power by 1. A character can't increase an aspect more than one Scale step via this method, nor can she increase more than her Psi/2 (rounded up) aspects total.

### Situational Advantage Scale Summary

- Roll to activate a power as normal.
- Spend four successes and four Psi points to increase one aspect of the power by 1 Scale.

# PSIONIC EDGES

Humanity is a diverse species full of individual expression. The Prometheus Chambers cater to a broad template of human in converting Latents to psions but individual human genomes and noetic templates often give rise to unexpected manifestations of power and control. The following Edges demonstrate some of the individual expression of psionic capability within the human species.

## CONSOLIDATED EFFORT (• TO •••)

**Prerequisites:** Psi users only

Most psions can make a conscious effort to use their psi powers to supplement what they achieve though their mundane skills, but your character does so instinctively. She gains Enhancement to Skill rolls equal to her dots in the relevant Mode or this Edge, whichever is lower. The Storyguide has final say on whether the character's Modes could legitimately assist the character's action.

*Example: A chef with Thermokinesis gains Enhancement when cooking as she subconsciously maintains optimum temperature at each stage of preparation. A psychokinetic athlete gains Enhancement when jumping or lifting as he Telekinetically boosts his movement. A telepath or biokinetic gain Enhancement when making sales pitches to customers as Rapport or Psychomorphing pheromones improve their satisfaction with the product.*

## CREATIVE SPARK (••)

**Prerequisites:** Psi users only and at least one dot in each Mode of their Aptitude

Your character intuitively grasps her Aptitude's potential beyond the defined Mode boundaries. Her creative uses are more versatile and powerful than those of her peers. The character gains 2 Enhancement when generating Creative Mode effects. Psiads can purchase this Edge multiple times, once for each of their Primary Aptitudes.

**Drawback:** The character's creativity isn't entirely compatible with pushing her powers beyond her dot ratings. She suffers +1 Difficulty to the roll when attempting to do so.

## ENDURING COMMITMENT (•• OR •••••)

**Prerequisites:** Psi users only

While all psions can commit Psi points to maintain non-instant powers as long as they desire, this only endures while the psion is conscious and able to maintain the minor effort commitment requires. Your character can continue this commitment on an unconscious level. If the character falls unconscious or is otherwise incapacitated (such as Taken Out) her committed psionic effects don't end instantly. At two dots the power still fades but more slowly — the power endures for one iteration of its standard duration for each Psi point committed before ending. At five dots the power continues indefinitely until the psion dies or regains sufficient awareness to end it.

**Drawback:** Psionic effects are indiscriminate without the character's awareness driving them. Enduring damaging effects — such as Thermokinesis' *Hellscape* may burn out of control and devastate the environment. Conversely, protective effects such as Adaptation's *Adapt* power or a Quantakinetic *Shield* may hinder allies' attempts to aid the character. The Storyguide has final say on how these affect the character or environment.

## HARMONIOUS APTITUDE (••••)

**Prerequisites:** Psi users only

Your character particularly resonates with the underlying principles of her Aptitude. When using Aptitude shaping the character may use her highest rated Mode to calculate dice pools, instead of the lowest.

## MALLEABLE FIELD (••)

**Prerequisites:** Psi users only

Biotechnology finds it easy to bond with something in your character's genetic or noetic makeup. Where others must provide a DNA sample and wait an hour, you can format bioware to your template within minutes by simply being in proximity. When within Short range of unformatted bioware, you may spend a Psi point to initiate the formatting. If your character is in a stressful situation — like attempting to steal the device — this becomes more difficult. Each round, the character rolls her Psi trait (only) in a modified complex action, aiming to accumulate as

many successes as the bioapp's Formatting Tolerance rating +1. Failing the roll costs nothing except more time, while botching the roll removes any accumulated successes. Once the character achieves the required successes, she spends one Psi point to complete the formatting.

**Drawback:** Bioapps are "eager" to format to the character. Unformatted bioware within Close range gives some sign of this eagerness. How noticeable this is to others depends on the bioapp. A biotechnology torch may shine on and off, a communicator may produce bursts of electromagnetic static, or a bioware car may lurch against its brakes in anticipation.

## PSIONIC CONDUIT (•• OR ••••)

**Prerequisite:** Psi users only

All psi users allow and control the flow of psi through them. Most can only direct this flow towards manifesting their powers. Your character can act as a conduit directing psionic flows between psi users or other psionically charged items. At two dots, the character can touch a willing psi user and transfer Psi points with them. She can transfer up to her Psi trait per round and can't ever hold more Psi points than her maximum pool. At four dots, the character may take or impose Psi points on unwilling targets. Roll the character's Psi trait + highest Attribute from her Favored Approach at a Difficulty equal to the target's Psi trait. Success transfers Psi points at the rate described above — the character need only make this roll once to initiate the effect, which lasts until she ceases touching the target, or the target's Psi pool reaches 0 or maximum capacity. Bioapps and other psionically active objects use their Formatting Tolerance rating as Psi trait, if applicable.

## STRONG ASPECT (•••)

**Prerequisite:** Psi users only

Your character's psionic abilities are particularly strong in a specific aspect. She adds +1 Scale to one aspect of her powers, such as Size or Damage. The player must choose which aspect the character enhances when purchasing this Edge. This Edge can only be taken once and may apply to a Mode of the psion's primary Aptitude or her Auxiliary Modes.

**Drawback:** Strength is not always easy to control. The character suffers +1 Complication when she wishes to use this aspect of her powers at the lower Scale. Failing to buy off the Complication results in the power manifesting at the higher Scale.

## SUPPLEMENTAL SKILLS (••)

**Prerequisites:** Psi users only

Psi doesn't rely on the psion's mundane skills — a vitakinetic doesn't have to understand conventional medicine to heal, nor does a psychokinetic need advanced physics to telekinetically move objects. Nonetheless, your character's mundane knowledge supplements her psionic abilities. She can apply Skill Specialties (**Trinity Continuum** p. 45) to her psi rolls if the Specialty is applicable to the power use.

*Example: A vitakinetic with Aim 3 and Specialty Pistols could apply this when activating her Iatrosis to treat a gunshot wound, while a biokinetic with the same skills could gain the bonus when using Transmogrify to build a biolaser from her own flesh.*

## UPWARDS FOCUS (•••)

**Prerequisites:** Psi users only

Your character is skilled at pushing her power beyond her comfortable knowledge. The character gains +2 Enhancement when attempting to use her powers at a higher dot rating than she possesses. If the character has five dots in a Mode, she can even push herself to access the sixth dot in that Mode, but she must spend 5 Psi points to do so.

**Drawback:** The intense focus makes it harder to see the possibilities outside the Mode's structured progression. The character suffers +1 Difficulty when attempting to use Creative Modes.

CHAPTER TEN

# TECHNOLOGY

"We shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us."
— Marshall McLuhan

The psi orders and the Æon Trinity are transforming the world with their noetic biotechnology, but some of this biotech, along with similar amounts of conventional hardtech, are designed by the psi orders for their own use. The following are just a few of the many items each psi order has available, along with a few cutting edge items that are currently prototypes undergoing field tests — tests that daring characters could become a part of.

# ÆSCULAPIAN ORDER TECHNOLOGY

The Æsculapian Order has access to some of the finest first responders and medical technology humanity has ever created, and engineers and designers working for this psi order regularly create new technologies to keep both docs and the people they are rescuing or treating safe.

**Exo-Stabilizer:** Most rescue stations maintain at least one of these suits of powered armor. When worn, it enhances its wearer's physical strength and also provides environmental protections. The suit seems unnecessarily bulky, and is at its most effective when *not* worn.

The suit is used to lift rubble off of survivors, open doors, or similar functions. With a verbal command, the user can open up the back or chest and climb out as it reinforces itself to maintain its current position. For example, a wearer can lift one end of a vehicle off of someone, step out of the armor, pull them from under the vehicle, and re-enter it. When used to hold, stabilize, or brace something, it functions with Scale 3 lifting capacity. Depending on how much physical stress is applied to it, it can last for up to an hour in this fashion before its power cells give out or it collapses.

This suit must be adjusted to individual wearers and regularly recharged when not in use. The reinforcement ability involves a drastic internal reconfiguration, meaning the suit cannot be worn when operated this way. Getting in and out is a careful affair (with literal wiggle room provided by the bulk), as said reconfiguration happens around the wearer as they move to maintain physical integrity.

**Mobile Infirmary:** This vehicle is a large motorhome with living quarters for two (or up to four if comfort isn't an issue) and supplies to provide medical care roughly on par with a simple clinic. They're not as fast or maneuverable as a typical ambulance (though they can serve as one in a pinch), as their purpose is to enable treatment in the middle of nowhere. They're mechanically identical to a cargo hauler (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, pg. 299), with the cargo space taken up by equipment providing +1 Enhancement to basic medical care. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** 3, **Cost:** •••••

**Portable Modular Clinic:** Despite the administrators' best efforts, Æsculapians in the field often refer to these structures as the 'pop-up clinic'. The pop-up clinic is a prefabricated structure about the size of a large trailer or small house that can be transported into crisis areas (both on and away from Earth) where a truck's worth of equipment is not enough. They're built on a template and easily reconfigured into different designs based on specific needs, from a quick lab for testing and treating a disease to a fully-stocked surgical suite. They can be environmentally sealed for quarantine purposes, or if deployed to hostile environments, and multiple units can be deployed together and connected with

## EXO-STABILIZER

| TYPE | BASE | TAGS | SIZE | TECH | FT | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exo-stabilizer | Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant | Complete 3, Environmental 1, Hard 2, Powered 0, Soft 2 | Size 1 | Hard | n/a | • • • |

umbilical tunnels. The Order keeps several preconfigured, stocked, and ready to go at a moment's notice.

Each clinic has a small control room with a teleportational helm (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, pg. 291), to allow a teleporter to deploy directly into the field. Mechanical legs can unfold from underneath for stabilization in case of a rough arrival, seismic activity, or explosive impact. With some preparation they can be transported by cargo hauler or airdropped.

A small hyperfusion reactor powers each portable clinic. These structures also have their own life support, and are fully capable of lasting at least two weeks without outside assistance. Because resupplying at a battlefield, disaster area, or extraterrestrial location can be difficult, standard procedure for longer-term deployment is to regularly teleport the structure back to a clinic (possibly with patients in tow) and replace it with a fresh one. Away from the action, an individual unit can be sterilized and restocked in 1-4 hours and completely reconfigured in 4-12.

The portable modular clinic is primarily intended for and used by Æsculapians, but the Upeo wa Macho keep a few on hand for emergencies. Someone with deep pockets and the right connections could acquire one as well. Most of the Order's units are stored at Port-au-Prince, with others scattered around for when shorter-range deployment is viable and teleporters are unavailable. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** 3, **Cost:** ••• or more depending on loadout

**Regen Pod:** This bioapp was originally developed as a joint project between the Æsculapians and Orgotek to create a portable emergency medical system. It supplements field hospitals in war zones and disaster areas. When closed, a regen pod is a bright red sphere about the size of a basketball. When activated, it opens up into a sack large enough to envelop a body of roughly human proportions, at which point the outside thickens to a texture like a watermelon rind. The subject or formatted user can open or close it with a mental command, with the latter overriding the former in conflicts. Through a combination of muscular pressure, minute cilia, and special glands that secrete drugs, it stabilizes and treats a subject's injuries.

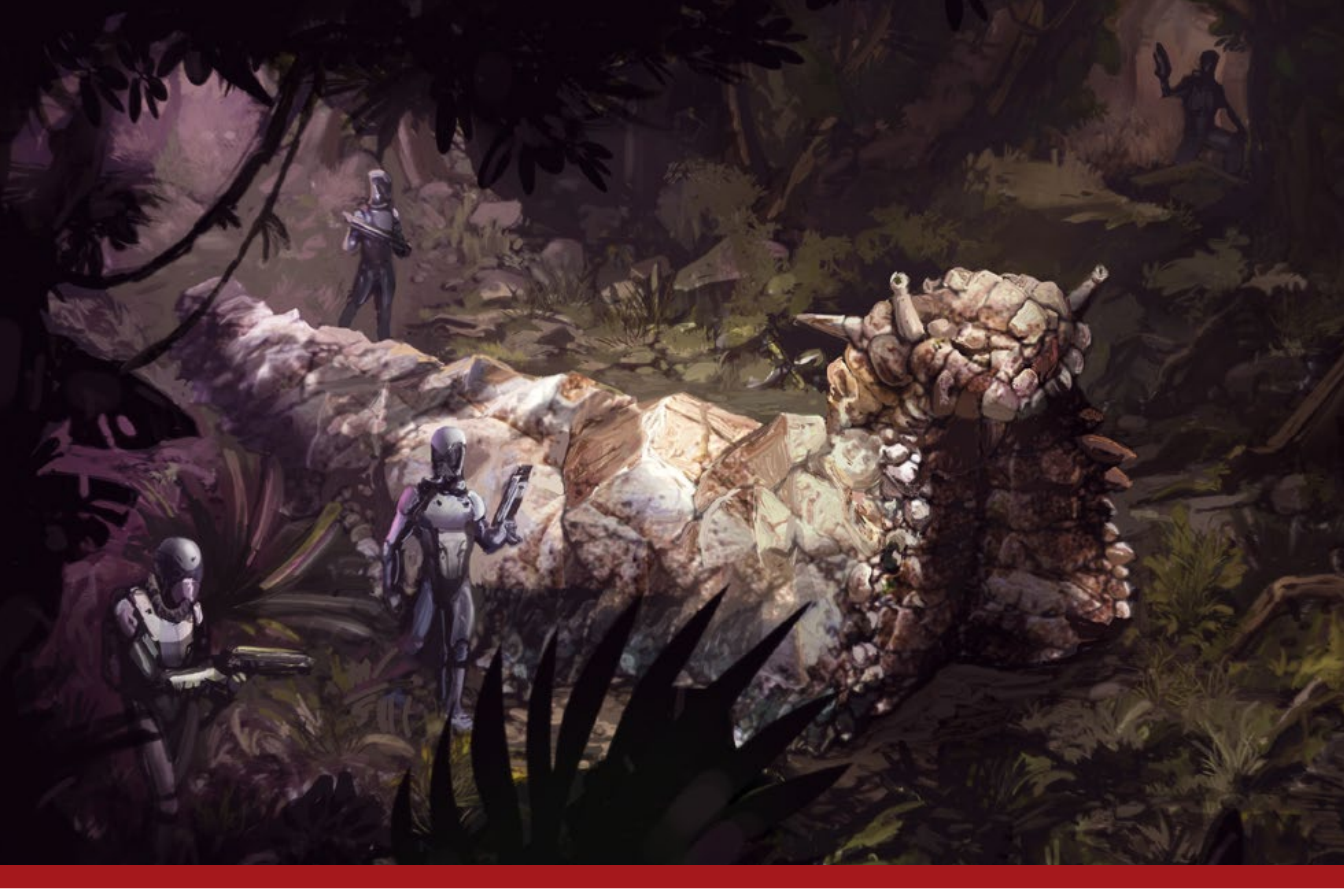
The pod can be used unformatted, in which case it's identical to a survival blanket (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, pg. 284). When formatted, the user can mentally monitor a subject's vital signs as if using Kirlian Eye, and the subject can heal damage as if they possessed Knit at the user's Psi rating (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, pg. 259 for both). A psion has +2 Enhancement to use Iatrosis on the subject. A formatted user may apply the regen pod to themselves and receive the benefits. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** ••, **Cost:** ••••

**Sterile Mist:** This antiseptic mist coats surfaces to protect them from infectious agents. Increase any Difficulty to deliberately infect any such surface by 4. The aerosol dispensers that deploy the mist may be handheld or incorporated into the walls of hospitals, vehicles, or portable modular clinics. When applied, sterile mist fills a space five meters across with a thin white fog. The visible fog itself fades after 15 minutes (more in a confined space, less in an open area), but affected surfaces remain protected for an hour or longer. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Small (for a portable aerosol bottle), **Cost:** • (one bottle/cartridge contains 25 uses)

**Variable Injector:** This pen-shaped bioapp was developed in tandem with Huang-Marr Biotechnics, building off of systems developed for their pharmapod device (**Mission Statements**). It delivers drugs into the bloodstream either as a jet injector, or by growing a needle it can shed. It accepts and adjusts to any standard-sized drug vial and injects in the traditional manner, but when formatted it can synthesize drugs from scratch.

A formatted user with even the most basic medical knowledge can generate viable medication by focusing on the intended result and the biological systems involved. They may make a Medicine + Intellect roll, Difficulty equal to the drug's cost (minimum 1), to produce a dose of any of the drugs on page 288 of **Trinity Continuum: Æon**. The same roll at Difficulty 1 can also produce a standard array of medications and injections suitable for a +1 Enhancement to mundane medical care.

A vitakinetic or biokinetic (including Auxiliary Modes and psiads with relevant Aptitudes) can use a formatted injector to synthesize the drugs and medications listed above without a roll and use their highest relevant Mode as the Enhancement for mundane medical care. They can also produce more unusual, complex medications at the Storyguide's discretion with a Medicine + Intellect roll. The variable injector may need to 'rest' after extensive use. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** •, **Cost:** ••



# CHITRA BHANU TECHNOLOGY

The revived Chitra Bhanu now works closely with psi order Norça, who allow this psi order to use their facilities for creating new noetic biotech. Currently Chitra Bhanu is primarily working to produce items that reduce Corruption, help cure Quantum Flux diseases, and help themselves remain hidden from the Doyen and others who might come after them.

**Corruption Reducing Injections:** Like vitakinetics, quantakinetics cannot cure Corruption diseases on their own. Accomplishing this goal requires a quantakinetic to, at least temporarily, suppress the Corruption in the patient's body. Once a quantakinetic has done this, the least serious Quantum Flux diseases swiftly heal on their own, and vitakinetics can easily cure any of the more serious diseases. However, there are only a few dozen quantakinetics, and because their order is no longer supposed to exist, they cannot openly offer their services to an Æsculapian clinic. Instead, some members of the revived Chitra Bhanu have found a way to help people without putting themselves or their colleagues at risk – Corruption reducing injections or CRI. This treatment consists of an injection of a noetically active biotech fluid that remains active in the subject's body for approximately five days, suppressing one or more points of Corruption. This unique biotech cannot be used without a quantakinetic. To create one dose of this medicine, a quantakinetic who has one or more dots in the Fundamentals Mode touches the fluid, makes a successful roll to activate the *Drain* power and spends two additional psi points above that needed to activate this power. Once the quantakinetic has charged the fluid, it is noetically active, but it only remains active for a relatively short while. The CRI must be used within the next 30 hours, after which time it becomes inert and provides no benefit to a patient. Once used, it duplicates the effects of the *Drain* power (Fundamentals •••) on the subject, and lasts for five full days. Despite the quantakinetic not needing to be present when it is used, when someone injects it into a patient, make a roll as if that quantakinetic used *Drain* on that subject. So far, this is the only power that can be effectively stored in a biotech fluid, but some members of Chitra Bhanu are researching ways to store other powers in this fashion. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Tiny, **Tolerance:** n/a, **Cost:** n/a

(only available from Quantakinetics, who typically give it away).

**Flux Eater:** This recently created creature is the result of a joint effort between Chitra Bhanu and Norça, where Chitra Bhanu researchers worked with Norça noetic engineers. It appears to be an armored slug six meters long and almost two meters wide and tall. It possesses a powerful noetic field allowing it to consume Quantum Flux, transforming it into noetic energy that helps nourish this creature. All it needs to do is crawl slowly over a Corrupted area, and it automatically reduces the ambient level of Quantum Flux. In theory, it could eliminate all Quantum Flux Zones on Earth, but it suffers from several limitations based on the relatively primitive state of human noetic biotechnology. Its three most important limitations are:

- These creatures cannot reproduce, instead each one must be grown in a laboratory.
- It can only reduce the Corruption rating of a location by one point. Even if the creature returns to the location days or weeks later, it still cannot reduce the level further.
- Flux eater's move relatively slow. Their top speed is only three kilometers an hour. It can only remove Corruption from areas it physically crawls over, and it can only work for 12 hours a day — after that it requires both rest and several hours of large-scale nutrient injections. Also, while it can eliminate Corruption in soil and rock, it has no effect on Corrupted living creatures, including people suffering from Corruption diseases. However, even with these limitations, it is a marvel the proxies of both psi orders are eager to use on the Plaguelands and other QFZs.

**Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** 2, **Tolerance:** •••, **Cost:** ••• when it is released for sale.

**Noetic Barrier:** While the Corruption on the surface and the fact it's located deep underground combine to shield the Venezuela Blight Zone Research Center from noetic scrutiny, the safe houses and laboratories used by various Chitra Bhanu cells lack such protections. All quantakinetics understand there is a chance, albeit a small one, that whenever they use their powers, a clear or other psion might notice. Derived from research into how the *Psi Cloak* power functions, this device provides a partial solution. A noetic barrier is a floral bioapp designed around the Amazonian monkey brush vine. The user formats this vine and then lays it around the area she wishes to protect from noetic scrutiny. Rather than creating noetic "static" or a potentially obvious noetic "dead zone" this vine simply prohibits anyone outside the protected area from sensing any noetic activity inside. This bioapp provides a level 5 Complication to all attempts to use clairsentience or any other noetic power to sense noetic activity within the protected region. Failure to buy off this Complication means the psion can detect all noetic activity outside the protected area normally, but notices nothing unusual about the protected area or the bioapp itself. This bioapp works to hide all noetic activity, not just quantakinesis, but it only works if everyone inside the protected area refrains from using any psionic power to attempt to affect or communicate with anyone or anything outside of the protected region. This bioapp does nothing to hide such activities. However, using clairsentience or other Aptitudes inside the protected area solely to sense events occurring outside the protected area does not interfere with this bioapp, and cannot be sensed when it is active. This bioapp is slightly less than a centimeter in diameter, and different vines can easily be grafted onto one another, allowing users to create quite long vines, capable of concealing large areas from noetic scrutiny. Most vines are 25 meters long, and are able to conceal psionic activity in a square room or small building room no more than six meters on a side. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** large, **Tolerance:** • (•• for vines longer than 50 m), **Cost:** n/a (only available from Chitra Bhanu)

**Psychic Mask:** Based on reverse engineering a cranium matt (**Mission Statements**) that an operative of psi order Norça managed to retrieve, this bioapp was designed by a joint team of Chitra Bhanu and Norça researchers. These researchers and technicians specifically created this bioapp to fool telepaths. Since it lacks the cranium matt's other functions, it can be made considerably less obvious. In its unformatted state, it appears to be an exceedingly thin and flexible ivory colored ski mask. When formatted and worn, it changes color to appear indistinguishable from the wearer's skin color, conforms to the wearer's head and face, and opens thousands of tiny holes to allow the wearer's hair to grow through, in much the same way that bioweave armor (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, p. 272) works when formatted. As a result, anyone looking closely at the wearer must overcome a level 4 Complication to notice the wearer's face and head look slightly "off". Failure to buy off this Complication means the observer notices

other facts about the wearer, but not that they are wearing anything unusual on their head.

Once the user has formatted it, a psychic mask both shields the wearer's thoughts from scanning and also copies them. With a thought, the user can instruct this bioapp to not copy thoughts on particular topics or about particular places or events, and instead fill in with a mixture of the user's other thoughts and thoughts and emotions the user instructs it to produce. The psychic mask imposes a level 4 Complication on all attempts to use Telepathy to read or affect the user's thoughts or emotions. Failure to buy this Complication off means the power instead affects or detects the psychic mask. In addition, the psychic mask alerts the user if a telepath is attempting to read or influence their thoughts or emotions and what any such influence is. If a psion is aware of this bioapp's presence, reduce the Complication to level 2. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** ••, **Cost:** ••• (typically only available to members of Chitra Bhanu and Norça)

**Shielding Suit:** This bioapp consists of a thin layer of noetically active tissue that can be bonded to any sealed suit including both vacuum environment suits and any armor that can be sealed for protection against gas, radiation, or temperature extremes. If the armor has the environmental tag (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, p. 269) at any level, it can use this bioapp. This bioapp has three effects: it eliminates any risk of exposure to Quantum Flux for the wearer, it increases the difficulty of all attacks that involve using Quantum powers directly on the wearer by +1, and it completely hides the wearer from all forms of noetic detection, including clairsentience. However, it offers no protection from noetic attacks and is also no help against Aberrants using Quantum powers to drop a large but completely ordinary rock on the wearer.

The user can easily switch the suit's protection against noetic detection between causing noetic scrutiny to register the wearer as a neutral, and shutting down her Psi, providing all the benefits of doing this with the quantakinetic *Psi Cloak* basic power. Also, unlike *Psi Cloak*, both options provided by this bioapp continue to work normally if the wearer uses any noetic powers on herself. However, using noetic powers to affect anything other than the wearer and any object that is on or inside the suit are as easy to detect as they would be if the psion were not wearing this suit. This suit is in common use by individuals working in the Venezuela Blight Zone Research Center when they venture into the Plaguelands. Also, as part of their research sharing agreement with psi order Norça and Chitra Bhanu, Norça personnel also have access to armor fitted with this bioapp – which keeps neutral employees safe from Quantum Flux exposure, and permits shifters to use their powers while still being protected from psionic scrutiny. Norça technicians have started building this bioapp into suits of shifting armor (**Trinity Continuum: Æon**, p. 272). In addition, Norça recently began selling this bioapp commercially, and discretely giving a substantial cut of the profits to Chitra Bhanu. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** n/a (built into armor), **Tolerance:** •, **Cost:** •• to add to armor.

# ISRAN TECHNOLOGY

ARES pods, focal crystals, and the Tessers used in Leviathan jump ships are the most well known noetic technologies developed for use by clears, ISRA has developed several additional devices

**Emotive Pigment:** Focal crystals are the standard for encoding thoughts, feelings, memories, and noetic impressions for other clairsentients to read. There are other methods though, and emotive pigments are the hot new fad among ISRAns. These biotech cylinders, about the size of a thick marker, secrete a colorless paste that, when applied to a surface, begins to gently broadcast an emotional state. Applying more pigment strengthens that emotional signal, and a given cylinder has enough pigment to generate a very strong signal indeed — this requires coating a couple square meters of wall with the stuff. In enclosed spaces, this can result in Complications to noetic scanning, particularly if the pigment used is of an emotion contrary to the local noetic mean. Emotive pigments last for about a day or two in dry conditions, a week or so in ordinary ones, and have been known to persist for over a month in high-humidity environments (particularly if they get sunlight). Emotive pigments come in a package with the following emotions: Delight, Affection, Fear, Gloom, Anger, Awe, and Serenity. ISRA biotech engineers are hard at work developing other formulations, though some enterprising emotion artists have taken to mixing the pigment to create more complex variations on emotional states. Marking a surface with emotive pigment takes no more time than

marking it with any other pigment. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** n/a, **Cost:** •

**Flashwhimper:** Designed for sanitizing the noetic medium after traumatic events, this unassuming pebble-textured cylinder effectively bleaches the psionic detail out of a local place and time. This leaves it neutral, quiet, and ready to accept new noetic imprints going forward and adding +3 Difficulty to any roll to scan it with Attunement or Clairsentient powers. Since this can easily be used in a malicious manner, flashwhimpers are carefully controlled by ISRA, and not shared outside of the Order. Psions exposed to a flashwhimper discharge within Medium Range suffer +2 Difficulty to all Attunement rolls for the next hour. Once discharged, a flashwhimper requires a full day of rest to recharge. **Technology:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** ••, **Cost:** •••

**Focal Relay:** The focal crystal is a marvel of biotech, allowing clairsentients to experience the thoughts, experiences, and emotions of others even from a great distance. Its one weakness is simply that, to do so, those thoughts, experiences, and emotions must be encoded ahead of time. The focal relay, visually identical to its predecessor, is a new development in focal crystal technology, eschewing the ability to record experiences and opting instead to maintain a constantly-updated stream of consciousness. As long as it's formatted and operating, other clairsentients can scan for and read this stream, piggybacking on the user's senses. Any psion may use a focal relay; however, if the user is a clear and is currently employing a noetic scan, meditating, or in dhikr, other clairsentients can even perform a noetic scan of their own *from that location*, treating their scan range as if they were physically present. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Tiny, **Tolerance:** •, **Cost:** ••

**Ink:** This thick black liquid, synthesizable even in the most ramshackle of labs, is a mild narcotic that induces feelings of "couch-lock" similar to certain strains of cannabis. Unlike cannabis, however, Ink doesn't build tolerance over time. Treat this as +1 Difficulty to all physical activities. When used by psions, it has the additional effect of temporarily inhibiting their ability to Attune; each dose does so for one hour, up to a maximum of six hours — after that, the user's neurology is saturated to the point where adding more achieves nothing. It's currently unknown precisely what element of Ink does this, and while this affects all psions, it's particularly debilitating for clairsentients. Still, it has some therapeutic uses, particularly in cases of psionic dysfunction and attunement-induced anxiety. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Tiny, **Tolerance:** n/a, **Cost:** • (•• where illegal)

**Lookit:** A Lookit is a small, opaque marble that does nothing but generate an extremely annoying noetic signal. Used for pranks within ISRA as much as for training (its ostensible purpose), it's also a surprisingly effective method of tracking, since it has no EM signature whatsoever and is visually indistinct. Clairsentients suffer +2 Complication to Attunement in the presence of a Lookit, which if not bought off renders all other perception through Attunement muddy and indistinct (because the clear can't help but notice the damned Lookit). However, at any range greater than Medium, the clear actually receives +2 Enhancement to locate the Lookit. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Tiny, **Tolerance:** n/a, **Cost:** • (and your dignity)

**Manta Mini Jump Ship:** This experimental jump ship is the smallest jump ship possible to build using current technology. It was recently developed by a joint ISRA/Æon Trinity task force in response to

## MANTA MINI JUMP SHIP

| TYPE | SIZE | HANDLING | SPEED | TAGS | WEAPONS | TECH | FT | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mini Jump Ship | 4 | -1* | 6/[3] | Armor 1, Cargo 2, Complex 0, Computer 0, Crew −2, Hybrid 2, Massive 1, Psi −1, Repair Bots 1, Sluggish −1, Tesser 2, Weaponry 1 | Laser Carbine | Ψ | ••• | ••••• |

* Reduce Maneuverability by 1 if not formatted.

Otha Herzog's cryptic suggestion that such a vessel would "soon prove important". The designers recently delivered two to ISRA and are almost done with one for the Æon Trinity. If these vessels prove successful, ISRA will request more. Its variable interior spaces have room for a dozen passengers and crew in small cabins, in addition to a small cargo hold. It's relatively slow and only lightly armed, it requires a crew of five (including the clairsentient navigator) to pilot, it's not particularly fast or maneuverable, but it can both land and take off from planets and travel to the stars without the need for a teleporter by using its miniature Tesser. Its name comes from the fact it looks somewhat like a manta ray and is designed to be able to operate underwater as well as both atmosphere and space.

**Sensory Overlay Tool:** This bioapp, a thin film that adheres to the back of the neck, is ultimately descended from augmented-reality implants common in the latter half of the 21st Century, allows a user to overlay outside information over their normal senses. While designed initially to connect to a focal crystal and allow a non-clairsentient to experience the data contained within, some ISRAns use this device as a portable sensory deprivation tank to screen out distracting influences while conducting noetic scans; negate any Complications arising from environmental conditions when used in this manner. Unfortunately, this also means it's an excellent tool to black-bag someone. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Tiny, **Tolerance:** n/a **Cost:** ••

**Tango Engine:** Designed for training new recruits' ability to visualize and maintain focus, the tango engine is finding new life as a collaborative art form within ISRA. The engine itself is a melon-sized egg-shaped shell, hard and chitinous, that rests on its long axis to stand upright. Unlike most biotech, the tango engine is designed to be attuned by two individuals, and doesn't work properly if attuned by only one. One partner, the lead, takes responsibility for generating ideation and emotion; the other partner, the follow, is responsible for lending shape and permanence to the ideas and emotion created by the lead. Together, they create a noetic tapestry that feels entirely real, as though it were really happening, and for the duration of the performance it overwrites the local noetic medium. Even non-clear psions experience a certain degree of emotional and ideational bleed through Attunement if they're present. While users in close proximity to the engine's performance can directly sense its energies, if scanned with Psycholocation from a distance it's entirely possible to fool another clear with it — any such scan suffers +3 Complication, which if not bought off results in the clear accepting the tango engine's noetic signature as the genuine article. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** •• (lead) • (follow), **Cost:** •••

**Working Memory Prosthesis:** While the technology for this neural prosthetic was developed in the mid 2050s, it relied on hardtech implanted via brain surgery. Some still use this technology, either for its intended purpose (allowing people with impaired working memory to maintain focus and complete tasks) or for augmenting short-term memory in neurotypical people far beyond the norm. A bioapp version of this prosthetic, based on the Qin Enhancement Polyp, now exists; a small nodule worn behind the ear, it can be applied and removed as desired. This prosthesis grants the 3-dot version of the Photographic Memory Edge (**Trinity Continuum Core Rulebook,** p. 59). However, when the bioapp is removed, it causes a level 2 Complication to all Mental Tasks, which if not bought off manifests as severe confusion and distractibility as users accustomed to a perfect working memory must adapt to what their own neurology can natively provide. This Complication persists for roughly 12 hours. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Tiny, **Tolerance:** • **Cost:** ••

# LEGIONS TECHNOLOGY

The following are some of the standard equipment the Legions issue to their soldiers.

## LEGIONS STANDARD-ISSUE KIT

Military uniformity isn't just about looking the same. Standardization of weapons and other equipment keeps costs down, simplifies logistics, and ensures (in theory) that only tested and proven designs enter the battlefield. Perhaps most importantly, it also allows every soldier to train extensively on a small number of designs so she can pick up any issued weapon or tool and use it effectively, and enables her to scavenge parts and ammo from fallen comrades.

The Legions are no exception to these principles, and the military psi order has a surprisingly low

number of unique and proprietary designs in its armories. Most Legions-exclusive gear is specialized biotech for military applications of psi. Other kit is off the shelf, mostly from Australian, Nihonjin, and African defense manufacturers who supply the same items to national militaries.

From a gameplay perspective, the big problem with standard-issue gear is t it runs counter to players' frequent desire to customize their characters' loadouts. Like military discipline (see the **In Formation** sidebar, **Trinity Continuum: *Æon***, p. 148), individual groups will need to calibrate this aspect of military science fiction to their preferences. On the "realistic" end of the scale, bringing personally-owned gear on a mission is at least cause for disciplinary action. For more cinematic action, assume that Legions regulations are flexible enough to make allowances for individual soldiers' preferences and perceived tactical needs.

For groups who stick with what the Legion Armory Edge provides, the following standard loadouts are appropriate for common circumstances in which Legionnaires may operate:

**Office or secure base**: Service uniform (counts as reinforced clothing; illustrated in **Trinity Continuum: Aeon**, p. 153); optional sidearm (slug-thrower pistol or laser gauntlet).

**Base in a combat theatre:** Field uniform (standard battle dress, see **Trinity Continuum: Aeon**, p. 272); sidearm; optional primary weapon (slug-thrower rifle or laser carbine); optional bayonet (enamel knife).

**Infantry combat operation:** Standard battle dress; primary weapon; bayonet; optional sidearm. For extended operations, add a field kit including survival blanket, GLUP pack, and infinite canteen (**Trinity Continuum: Distant Worlds**, p. 119). One soldier per fire team substitutes a heavy weapon (coilgun, missile launcher, or plasma thrower) for his primary weapon.

**Aircraft, vehicle, or VARG crew:** Flight suit (reinforced clothing) over optional bioweave armor; sidearm; enamel knife; field kit.

**Exoatmospheric infantry combat:** BES or armored VES; primary weapon; bayonet; optional sidearm, reentry pack (**Trinity Continuum: Distant Worlds**, p. 120), and field kit.

**Exoatmospheric flight crew:** Shipsuit (**Trinity Continuum: Distant Worlds**, p. 120) or BES; sidearm; enamel knife; reentry pack (**Trinity Continuum: Distant Worlds**, p. 120); field kit.

**Formal occasion:** Parade dress uniform (reinforced clothing); decorative but entirely functional sword for commissioned officers and senior NCOs; optional concealed sidearm.

**Ceremonial drill or guard duty:** Parade dress uniform over bioweave armor; well-polished slug-thrower rifle (enlisted) or slug-thrower pistol (NCOs and officers).

**Criminal investigation or shady Æon assignment:** Service uniform over bioweave armor; sidearm; optional less-lethal sidearm (sonic pistol or taser pistol); battle dress helmet and primary weapon concealed in gym bag or nearby vehicle.

Special operations units generally look like infantry units when they're operating overtly and investigators when working covertly. They have more flexibility than regular units in requisitioning non-standard items, particularly if they have to be deniable. Trained on a wide array of non-issue weapons and gear, they know how to use and maintain whatever they can get their hands on.

Psions also receive a bit more leeway to accommodate and enhance their unique advantages. Psi gauntlets are common, as are biotech ranged and melee weapons. If a hardtech item has a biotech equivalent that benefits from formatting, the Legions probably have limited quantities in inventory — with the understanding that if one is combat-lossed, the psion may have to suffer with a basic hardtech replacement until procurement catches up. The Storyguide, of course, can issue anything on the basis of "here, the commander said to take this" — including experimental gear that may carry interesting complications.

## SPACE VEHICLES

The Legions are at the cutting-edge of advanced military starship design.

**Black-Tipped Shark Shuttle:** Conventional wisdom regards stealth in space as impossible. Three-dimensional radar defense is incalculably complex and thermodynamics makes detection of even the coolest-running ship or propulsion system a trivial engineering matter. Conventional wisdom, however, doesn't account for the physics-violating properties of Photokinesis and Thermokinesis. BlackBody Concepts is a Legions-funded biotech lab charged with exploiting this potential. The Black-Tipped Shark is the firm's first success, a small hybrid shuttle with a crew of three (pilot, copilot, flight engineer) and space for 14 passengers. It mounts coilguns on its flanks for suppressive fire in hot landing zones, but

## STEALTH IN SPAAAAAACE!

BlackBody Concepts' stealth spaceship biotech relies on two separate systems incorporated into the vessel's spaceframe. The simpler is a Photokinetic bioapp that routes incoming electromagnetic radiation around the vehicle, preventing not only radar reflections but visual detection from occulted starlight. The strength of sunlight within a slay system, whether direct or from planetary reflection, can overpower this function, so it's only effective in deep space and the pilot must be careful to avoid silhouetting herself against a lighted background. It is not a perfect invisibility field, as the crew and the vessel's passive sensors still need apertures to see out. It provides no defense against lasers.

The more complex bioapp, and the real key to BlackBody's stealth designs, is a Thermokinetic "heat sump" that dissipates the heat the vessel would otherwise radiate. This renders it effectively invisible to thermal imaging and detection, including heat-seeking weapon systems. It can't fully mask engine emissions, however, so the vessel's Space Speed drops to [2] when the heat sump is active. Atmospheric entry overwhelms the heat sump, as does the amount of thrust necessary for atmospheric flight. It provides no defense against heat- or flame-based attacks.

BlackBody's vehicles also use conventional low-observable shapes and materials to reduce their signature in atmospheric flight. They're matte charcoal grey, with vaguely disquieting organic shapes (even for biotech). Current models use conventional propulsion but telekinetic drives are in development. If successful, these will further enhance stealth by eliminating both a vessel's exhaust plume and its single largest heat-generating system.

These designs are exclusive to the Legions, in very limited supply, and highly classified. Outside the order and a few intelligence agencies, they're rumors. The only unit currently flying them is the Seventh Legion's 41st Composite Wing, which provides transport and tactical air support for LIC covert operations.

| TYPE | SIZE | HANDLING | SPEED | TAGS | WEAPONS | TECH | FT | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Black-Tipped Shark Shuttle | 2 | +0 | 6/[4] | Cargo 1, Computer 0, Crew -1, Hybrid 2, Military 1, Psi -1, Stealthy 2, Thrusters 1 | Coilgun | Ψ | ••• | •••• |
| Black Widow Strike Fighter | 2 | +1 | 6/[4] | Armor 1, Computer 0, Crew -1, Hybrid 2, Maneuverable 1, Military 1, Psi -1, Stealthy 2, Thrusters 1 | Coilgun, Missile Launcher | Ψ | ••• | ••••• |
| Chiba-class Corvette | 3 | +0 | [5] | Armor 1, Astrogation Systems 1, Cargo 1, Computer 0, Crew -1*, Massive 1, Military 1, Repair Bots 1*, Thrusters 2 | Coilgun, Laser Carbine | Hard | — | L |

* Export models have Crew -2, no Repair Bots, and Cost ••••

it's by no means a combat vessel. Stealth and friendly fighters are its best defenses.

**Black Widow Strike Fighter:** Building on lessons learned from the Black-Tipped Shark, BlackBody's second limited-production design gives the Legions a stealthy precision strike capability. The Black Widow is primarily intended as a missile delivery platform, though it has acceptable dogfighting performance. This is necessary if its pilot and weapons officer are to survive more than one mission, as launching its payload will alert any defender that *something* is out there.

***Chiba*-class Corvette:** Nippon's first military spaceship is intended for commerce protection, search and rescue, and territorial sovereignty patrols as the nation takes its first steps into space. It's a compact 42-meter design with advanced automation, cutting-edge sensors, and some of the most comfortable crew quarters in any vac navy. Export models feature less automation and comfort, requiring a crew of 17 compared to the 10 for ships in Nihonjin High Fleet service. Customers include Hong Kong, several Bharati and ARDEP nations, and the Legions.

# MINISTRY OF NOETIC AFFAIRS TECHNOLOGY

The Ministry's Noetics Institutes has not only greatly advanced humanity's understanding of minds and consciousness, they are also at the forefront of creating new bioapps that are specifically useful to telepaths and the people who work with them.

**Artificially Imaged Mind:** An artificially imaged mind is a biological facsimile of a human mind, although it doesn't look much like one. Rather than a pulsating brain in a jar, an AIM is a series of thin plates of cerebral matter and nervous system grown across a plastic scaffold, safely secured inside a support module that keeps it soaked in biotech maintenance fluids. Monitors on the module alert handlers to any chemical imbalances or signs of neurological damage.

An AIM starts as a blank slate mind. A psion using Telepathy can detect an AIM like she would any other mind. Indeed, they're trivially easy to access, but read as dormant with occasional pulses of residual dream-like activity. However, careful use of Psychbending can sculpt a personality into the raw material of the AIM's psyche. During the construction and growth phase of the mind, the effects of Telepathic powers on an AIM are permanent; a psion using Rewrite can potentially build an entire lifetime of memories and emotional associations into one. The resulting simulacrum of a human mind responds realistically to direct Telepathic intrusion,

with a fabricated sea of surface-level thoughts and a complex labyrinth of recollections and drives, while its stunted nervous system allows for approximations of neurological consequences as well.

AIMs are largely used for the practice of Telepathy Modes, allowing a psion to wield her Aptitude on a mind that will respond somewhat realistically without risking harm to a real person. The training scenarios are increasingly sophisticated, and psyche-engineers are experimenting with mimicked noetic connections between sets of AIMs to further simulate group involvement in crimes and situations — requiring novices to pick out "guilty" minds from a larger set. The blank slate of a new AIM can also serve as the foundation for crafting a mental 'environment', a virtual room built from the brain's engineered engrams where multiple psions can telepathically link into the AIM.

The Ministry of Noetic Affairs does not sell AIM technology on the open market. It does lend small numbers to the Æon Trinity and other psi orders for their own Telepaths to practice with. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Large, **Tolerance:** n/a, **Cost:** ••

**Artificially Imaged Cortex Case:** An offshoot of AIM technology, a cortex case is a small armored device housing a limited brain facsimile. A telepath can implant 'memories' into the case's AIM, rendering it a secure method of transporting highly sensitive information. Even if seized or stolen, a cortex case is useless to anyone without Telepathy, as it presents no conventional electronic method of accessing its contents. This security is usually further enhanced via the use of telepathic imprint encryption (see below) on the data within.

A cortex case requires regular supply of biological maintenance fluids, but its small size and baseline-proof security make it a favorite for covert intel drops. A handler merely needs to leave one at a dead drop, and the telepath spy never even needs to interact with it directly to reach out into its mind and leave her report. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Medium, **Tolerance:** n/a, **Cost:** •••

**Artificially Imaged Decoy:** A top secret development from the AIM program, an artificially imaged decoy is a cutting-edge facsimile mind intended to fool or even harm telepaths. Running an elaborate simulation of a real human mind, the decoy does not immediately flag as fake to a telepath who accesses its thoughts or feelings; it has a dice pool of 5 to oppose Telepathy powers, and detecting the fraud requires buying off a level 5 Complication, although that level reduces by one each time the psion subsequently uses Telepathy on the decoy in the same scene.

If created with a mental trap, the mind also presents a level 3 Complication the first time a psion realizes that it's a fraud; failure to buy this off inflicts a single Mental Status Condition designed by the creating psyche-engineer, often via dragging the hapless telepath's perception into a labyrinth of nightmares. Most traps come with a mental "password" thought, allowing Ministry agents to connect into them without risk.

The Ministry uses artificially imaged decoys to catch out telepath agents working for other powers, and as part of security for VIPs and dignitaries. This does require a telepath first immerses themselves in the target's mind to accurately recreate the decoy in their image; since the existence of decoys is a secret, the Ministry takes the decision as to which politicians warrant such treatment itself, without the target's consent. Decoy canisters are carried by Ministry agents close to a target, or planted near a vulnerable location; a Noetics Affairs admin connects to the mind and monitors it for signs that it is under intrusion by a hostile telepath sweeping the area for their prey. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Large, **Tolerance:** n/a, **Cost:** ••••

**Bodyjack Implant:** A bodyjack is a surgically invasive implant, threading bundles of neural fiber bioapp through key locations in the recipient's body and connecting them to the brain. It serves to enhance and extend the influence that Telepathy can wield over the recipient. A psion who connects to the character via Network gains several benefits:

- She reduces the cost of using Access on the character to 0 Psi points.
- She reduces the cost of using Override on the character to 1 Psi point, but only for the purpose of copying the Telepath's higher Skills onto the character.
- She can use Possession on the character as a reflexive action if they are knocked unconscious or incapacitated, puppeting their body despite their incapacitation, and can always choose to leave the character aware of what happens while under Possession if she wishes.
- She can spend 1 Psi point to override the effects of a single Injury Condition on the character for one round.

Bodyjacks *always* come with telepathic imprint encryption limited to the authorized Telepath handlers. **Tech:** Ψ, **Tolerance:** •••, **Cost:** •••••

**Mind-Share Shard:** Mind-share shards are small bioapps that grant a neutral or psion access to the Network power, letting users connect to each others' minds. A user can only connect to another character with a mind-share shard or to a psion who possesses Network and cannot force the connection. It flags a mental request in the recipient's mind or shard, allowing them to accept or deny as they choose. However, shards do not count towards the maximum number of people Network can connect, allowing the inclusion of large numbers of shard users in a Network of bioapp or psion origin. Shards possess Material noetic connections to each other for the purpose of the Network power only.

While the Ministry keeps firm control over the manufacture of shards and limits them to order personnel, they come in a selection of pleasing leaf-like forms and designs. The current favorite in the central bureau is an autumnal golden membrane that attaches just behind the ear. **Tech:** Ψ, **Tolerance:** •, **Cost:** ••

**Owl Necrostimulant:** A product of the Echo Archive, *Maotouying* — "Owl" — is a drug, albeit not one intended for the living. The cocktail of chemicals and psychotropics comes in a sturdy automatic injector, letting a Ministry psion administer it with a simple press against the neck of a dead body. The mixture shunts the corpse's nervous system and brain into a destructive spasm of final activity; as long as the person didn't die more than four hours ago, for the remainder of the scene their mind becomes a valid target for the Mindshare mode. They're still dead, the psion can't elicit any conscious response from them via Network, and prowling through the mind of a corpse is a rather macabre experience. However, Owl offers a chance to trawl through memories, identify the lingering surface thoughts in place just before they died, or even draw on their skills with Override. At the end of the scene, the necrostimulant's effects wear off, and the damage to the dying cerebellum prevents any further use of Owl. **Duration:** One scene, **Cost:** •••

**Telepathic Imprint Encryption:** A telepathic imprint encryption device is a small, mother-of-pearl bioapp that reformats mentally-stored data into an encrypted form. Once encrypted, it's essentially a string of nonsense memories and mental static. A telepath who reads it from an AIM or another character's mind cannot decipher it without the encryption key, which is itself another string of mental data. By combining the engrams of encrypted memory and key, it unlocks the knowledge within into a coherent form.

To use a TIE device, the psion focuses on the thoughts or memories she wishes encrypted, and presses the bioapp against her temple; it mentally connects and creates an encrypted form of the knowledge in her mind, though it doesn't lock away her pre-existing understanding. She can copy that encrypted data into an AIM or other mind via Telepathy; the bioapp itself stores the encryption key for later access, which can be far simpler and passed on by simply informing a recipient of what they need to think of, whether a summer morning, pink elephants, or the notes in a particular bar of music in an orchestral piece. The encryption key *can* also be purely mental data that needs to be passed on telepathically as well. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** •, **Cost:** •••

**Telepathic Imprint Lock:** Common in Ministry installations, a telepathic imprint lock is a biotech sensor placed as part of a door, computer system, lift, or other purposes where a passcode or access card would usually be used. A character can use *Mindspeak* or *Network* to connect to the sensor, prompting it to check her registered telepathic template against a database of noetic signatures to validate identity and grant appropriate access. Essentially a form of glorified biometric security, it is nonetheless extremely effective as few would-be spies have access to the methods or means necessary to fool it. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** n/a, **Cost:** ••

# NORÇA, BIOSYSTEMS, AND SUDAMÉRICAN BIOTECHNOLOGY

Stemming from a deep connection to the land and an ongoing quest to preserve the pristine regions of Sudamérica while undoing decades of environmental damage, most Sudamérican biotech begins with a floral template. Projects like the Brasilia arcology feature the cutting edge of human biotech capability. Thanks to numerous Norça allies, Sudamérican research and development can shatter boundaries other engineers would find insurmountable. Qin allies played a major role in designing the Brasilia project and Norça enjoys a significant technological edge thanks to their clandestine alliance with the Chitra Bhanu. It follows that the most advanced vegetal-template biotech designs emerge from Sudamérican labs.

## NEW DESIGNS

Sudamérican designers are constantly seeking inventive ways to augment and supersede the inherent properties of floral biotech. Prototypes, unreleased development iterations, and devices that fulfill a secondary use outside their intended design are common in Sudamérican labs. Many of these designs are refined and released to the public, though those with stronger combat applications are either retained by the designer for personal use or provided to Norça for the good of the people.

### FLORAL BIOTECH TAGS

Most biotech drawn from a vegetable template operates with the same restrictions on rest and nutrient intake as those drawn from an animal template. However, Sudamérican bioengineers have unlocked the ability to tap into the basic processes of plant life to alter their biotech in remarkable ways.

**Photosynthetic (1 to 2):** Photosynthetic bioapps draw nutrients from sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water. While an app with this tag can accept nutrient injections, they can also draw nourishment from the environment. For one point, this tag allows the bioapp to function with minimal nutrient injections, as long as the bioapp receives 6 hours of exposure to sunlight (or UV grow lights) and a minimum of 10 milliliters of water per day per level of the bioapp's Size. Size 0 or smaller bioapps still require 10 milliliters of water per day to survive. As long as this level of exposure is maintained, the bioapp requires nutrient injections only once a month, regardless of the frequency of use. For 2 points photosynthesis provides all of the bioapp's nutritional needs if given proper water and sunlight. No nutrient injections are ever needed to maintain this bioapp.

**Rooted (– 1 or – 3):** Biotech with this tag must be planted in soil in order to function and survive. At – 1 the bioapp can be planted in a relatively small amount of soil and remain viable. Most biotech with the Rooted tag at this level uses a basic flowerpot design to hold the necessary soil. Some items with this tag, such as weapons and armor, include soil compartments within their casing. Whether receiving nutrient injections or water for photosynthesis, the nourishment must be delivered into the soil where the bioapp absorbs it through its root network. At – 3 the bioapp requires a deep enough root network to render it effectively immobile. Items of less than Size 2 rarely possess this tag at this level.

### COMMERCIAL BIOAPPS

Sudamérican consumer biotechnology focuses on convenience, quality of life improvement, and positive environmental impact. As some areas in Sudamérica still deal with income inequality and high crime rates, there is also a strong market for security biotech.

**Defensor:** the Defensor is a security bioapp installed throughout a home, office, or other structure. Resembling a biotech carpet with a similar texture and appearance to artificial turf, the Defensor covers the floor of the installed area from wall to wall. When an intruder steps onto the Defensor, the bioapp secretes a powerful adhesive, sticking the intruder in place. The Defensor can be controlled via a minicomp with a passcode, but a formatted user can control the Defensor with a thought, commanding it to catch or release at will. Attempting to free oneself from the adhesive grip of the Defensor requires an Athletics roll at difficulty 3. If successful, the escapee must also overcome a +2 Complication or lose their footwear as they try to pull free. If the trapped character is touching the Defensor with bare skin, this Complication is inflicted as an Injury Condition as the struggle with the Defensor rips the escapee's

## ARMA SECRETA

**Subtype:** Scout
**Size:** 1 (when not retracted)
**Tech:** Biotech
**Tolerance:** • • • •
**Life Support Days:** One Month+
**Armor:** Hard 3, Soft 3
**Base Speed:** 3
**Description:** When dormant, the Arma Secreta resembles eight circular flower buds, with the leaves folded over one another in a floral pattern. When the suit is deployed, these buds open up as thick green and brown vines extend from bud to bud, forming the vegetable carapace of the armor. The final result resembles a human with no skin, their muscles and bones replaced with vines and leaves.
**Weapons:** Laser Cannon, Vine Whip
**Tags:** Additional Armor 1, Augmented Run 1, Super Science 2 (Retractable), Weapon 1 x 2
**Unique Ability:** All Arma Secreta BioVARGS are retractable.
*Retractable:* The user can deploy the Arma Secreta at the beginning of their turn with a mental command. The Arma Secreta is fully deployed at the end of their turn. The Arma Secreta can be stored in the same fashion. The Arma Secreta provides no benefit unless deployed.

### VINE WHIP

| TYPE | EN | DMG TYPE | TAGS | TECH | SIZE | FT | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vine Whip | 4 | Ballistic | Brutal 1, Deadly 1, Hardpoint 2, Melee, Reach 1, Weighted 1, VARG Scale 1 | Ψ | 1 | – | • • • • • |

skin tissue. Notably, the adhesive covers the entire surface of the floor, so even if a character is able to rip loose from the adhesive, they will become stuck again as soon as they move unless they are able to reach a surface other than the floor to move onto. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Medium, **Tolerance:** •, **Cost:** •• (per 100 square meters)

**Flor de Água (Water Flowers):** Access to potable water is fundamental to preserving human life. In the cold depths of space, it is also a rare commodity. While there are several technologies that offer a means of generating, collecting, and purifying water, the Norça seek a more elegant solution. Flor de Água is an attempt to address humanity's need for water through plant-based biotech. This bioapp is a single, thick purple petal that stands approximately one meter high. The shape resembles the leaves of an echeveria elegans. The bioapp rests in a hardtech soil pod with an attached reservoir capable of holding up to 10 liters of water.

The bioapp absorbs carbon dioxide, like any other plant, but rather than producing oxygen, Flor de Água creates water. This water flows through a series of hollow vine structures inside the bioapp and collects in the attached reservoir. The water produced by the Flor de Água is perfectly clean water suitable for human consumption and requires no purification. While this represents a significant development in floral biotechnology Flor de Água is not without its limitations. The bioapp requires constant exposure to UV light in order to survive. Depriving a Flor de Água of light for as little as five minutes invariably kills the device, though this can be extended as long as twenty minutes if the bioapp is within close range of a formatted user. This design flaw is currently the only stumbling block preventing BioSystems

from pushing Flor de Água into mass production and distribution for use on space stations and ships. BioSystems technicians, with the aid of Norça specialists are working to overcome this design flaw while also testing Flor de Água on Luna, Mars, and several asteroid belt mining facilities. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Medium, **Tolerance:** •, **Cost:** ••• (includes UV grow lights)

### NORÇA BIOVARG

Norça makes extensive use of floral template BioVARGs. This allows for smaller, more agile designs and innovations that compliment biokinesis in remarkable ways. The newest and most exciting floral BioVARG to emerge from Norça labs is the Arma Secreta.

**Arma Secreta Scout BioVARG:** This BioVARG operates at the cutting edge of floral biotechnology. When unformatted, the Arma Secreta consists of eight circular flower pods with bright green petals, each about the size of a human hand. These pods adhere to the user's shoulders, knees, pectoral muscles, and lower back. When activated, the pods open, releasing a network of vines that surround the wearer, forming the BioVARG's outer shell. This allows the user to wear the BioVARG under baggy clothing and avoid visual detection of its presence until activated. Norça with Psychomorphing ••• often conceal Arma Secreta within their flesh, providing an additional layer of stealth and a nasty surprise for anyone who witnesses the Norça activating the armor. Watching viny bioarmor rip loose from the Norça's flesh and engulf their body is quite disturbing.

# ORGOTEK RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The various divisions of Orgotek are constantly pushing the boundaries of what is possible. Innovations in biotechnology and hardtech are the linchpins of Orgotek's immense financial empire.

## TECHNOLOGY IN USE

The following items can be encountered in the field, acquired by members of Orgotek, or deployed against their enemies.

### KNOWLEDGE IN MOTION

The Knowledge in Motion program is carried out through the deployment of Orgotek's Knowbus fleet. This vehicle contains living space for the crew of six instructors, as well as an onboard educational database, OpNet transponder, and storage for several dozen minicomps.

Though the KIM initiative technically operates under the WEI umbrella, Psi Orgotek is heavily involved. Each Knowbus carries two members of Psi Orgotek at all times. This is done for a number of reasons. Officially, the psions accompany the KIM program to provide security and maintenance. The FSA is a dangerous place, especially in low income neighborhoods and areas with high rebel activity. All members of Psi Orgotek are educated in the basics of FSA law regarding the use of psionics, but those who are dispatched on a KIM journey are given an advance legal course to ensure they do not break the law in the course of their security duties. As security officers, each Psi Orgotek member of the KIM crew is also required to format one of the web emitter carbines on the vehicle. Beyond this surface function, the presence of psions on all KIM tours provides Orgotek with the kind of PR money simply cannot buy. Psions engaging in acts of service to the impoverished not only helps with Orgotek's image but undermines the FSA's anti-psion sentiment. Lastly, having psions on the street provides Cassel valuable information on the challenges faced by the otherwise forgotten second-class citizens of the FSA.

## THE BLEEDING EDGE

At the outer edge of humanity's technical capability lies a broad selection of prototypes, experiments,

**ORGOTEK KNOWBUS**

| TYPE | SIZE | HANDLING | SPEED | TAGS | TECH |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Orgotek Knowbus | 2 | Armor 2, Cargo 1 Computer 0, Fast 1, Massive 1, Sluggish −1, Weaponry 1, Wheeled 0 | Web Emitter Carbine | Hard | • • • • |

and technologies in the midst of moving from the drawing board to realization. The items in this section are the cutting edge of what Orgotek has to offer. Some of these items still carry flaws in the design that have yet to be resolved. Others are on the cusp of distribution, be it publicly, to the other psi orders and Æon, or merely within Orgotek itself.

## CRF-2

Chromatic Research Facility Two is the hub of the burgeoning conflict between humans and the Chromatics. Several employees of Lumen, both neutral and psionic, have moved to Karroo Mining Colony to lend their expertise to the war effort. The work being done at CRF-2 has produced some remarkable inventions.

**Chromatic Translator**: As the Chromatic conflict escalates, humanity needs a reliable means to communicate with these enemies. Telepaths and photokinetics working in tandem are able to communicate fairly effectively, but Lumen is working toward a more elegant answer.

This biotech helmet is outfitted with audiovisual sensors which pick up communication in the Chromatic language and process it into human speech. There are also a series of bioluminescent tentacles that dangle from the top of the helmet to different heights, mimicking internal organ placement of the Chromatic anatomy. This allows the device to pick up human speech and process it into Chromatic speech. The translator in its current form is bulky and must be formatted by a psion. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Medium, **Tolerance:** ••, **Cost:** ••••

## PROJECT PLAIN SITE

The biotech cloaking device used at Project Plain Site is a marvel of cutting edge electromanipulation and biotech engineering techniques. The cloaking device on the station is actually derived from a pair of devices, both of which require formatting by an electrokinetic to use. Plain Site has an outer biotech shell that is capable of photokinetic manipulation. This visual cloak combined with an Electrokinetic Modulation Matrix worked into the interior machinery creates an effective cloaking device capable of hiding the station and any docked ships from most forms of detection. The other component of the cloaking device is a Clairvoyance Interruption Field which interferes with remote sensing. The cloaking technology used in this station causes massive power drain. A secondary fusion reactor is installed at the station, with its sole output dedicated to maintaining the CIF, EMM and visual cloak. Even using the secondary reactor, only two of the three cloaking subsystems can be activated at a time. Cassel hopes to solve that issue so that Leviathans can be outfitted with cloaking devices.

**Clairvoyance Interruption Field:** The CIF creates a sort of psionic chaff preventing anything on the station from being located via the *Dowsing* (••) power. To activate the CIF, the psion must spend 3 psi points which must remain committed while the device is active. While the CIF is active, any attempt to locate an object in the area with the *Dowsing* (••) power suffers a +5 difficulty. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Large, **Tolerance:** ••••, **Cost:** L

**Electrokinetic Modulation Matrix:** The EMM uses basic photokinetic principles to scramble and distort the electromagnetic spectrum along the outside of a vehicle or object. To activate the EMM, the formatting electrokinetic must expend and commit 3 psi points for the duration of the effect. This scrambles the infrared, ultraviolet, and radio frequencies emitting from the vehicle or object to which it is attached. This creates an unnatural sensory static when observing the region within extreme range of the vehicle or object. Observers can definitely detect something is unusual, but the EMM imposes a Complication of 5 to all rolls attempting to pinpoint the actual location of the EMM affected device. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Large, **Tolerance:** ••••, **Cost:** L

**Visual Cloak:** This device allows the user to generate a sphere of invisibility by shifting light around the object in which it is housed. The device presents a massive power drain, not only on the system in which it is installed, but on the psion operating it. This issue, along with the sheer size of the device, are roadblocks Orgotek engineers are currently working to resolve.

When visual cloak is activated, the operator must expend and commit 6 psi points. This renders the entire object or vehicle housing the device invisible as described in the Illusionist (•••••) power. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Size 0, **Tolerance:** •••••, **Cost:** L

# UPEO WA MACHO TECHNOLOGY

Between the challenges of interstellar exploration and the threat to teleporters represented by the Chromatics, Upeo wa Macho has worked hard to develop various technologies to keep their personnel safe.

**Chaff Grenade:** These simple, hard tech grenades are used as an active deterrent against lasers and other photokinetic abilities. Containing thousands of miniaturized reflective metallic implements designed to float in still air for up to five minutes, each chaff grenade covers an area withing short range in these reflective microsurfaces. Any laser fired into or out of that field suffers a +3 Complication that, if not bought off, randomizes the target of the blast. Chaff grenades also cause mild irritation to the skin and lungs if inhaled, imposing +1 Difficulty on appropriate actions. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** N/A, **Cost:** •

**Diata bioVARG:** This Scout bioVARG is visually inspired by the predatory species from Ruan's World. Designed specifically for Upeo wa Macho teleporters, the Diata Class Scout VARG allows a psion to use the Translocation Mode as if the bioVARG was a normal piece of clothing.

Most commonly associated with Wawindaji strike teams, the Kupita also uses Diata bioVARGs for exploring in hazardous environments. While they are Scout VARGs, they are also deadly hit and run combatants, capable of getting the drop on enemies by appearing suddenly and then teleporting away after a brutal opening salvo.

**Subtype:** Scout
**Size:** 1
**Tech:** Biotech
**Tolerance:** • • • •
**Life Support Days:** One Month+
**Armor:** Hard 2, Soft 2
**Base Speed:** 3

**Description:** Standing just over two meters high, the Diata has two legs and two arms. Each arm contains a weapon hardpoint which folds the weapon into storage, much like how the actual Diata folds their claws out of sight, assisting in the VARG's slim, stealthy profile.

**Weapons:** Due to the threat of Chromatics, Diata-Class VARGs are never armed with electromagnetic weaponry. Instead, they are armed with either a flechette cannon or coilgun in one Hardpoint and a Pile Bunker in the other.

**Tags:** Augmented Run, Psi -1, Stealthy, Super-Science 2, Weapon 1, Weapon 1

**Unique Ability:** The Diata bonds to the user, and a psion pilot may use Translocation Mode effects as if the Diata were normal clothing.

**Flickershield:** Developed to protect personnel who find themselves in live combat, a Flickershield utilizes a randomized pattern of short range Transportals to redirect incoming fire away from the target.

Deployed as a belt-worn device, the flickershield must be activated by a formatted user. To improve the utility of the flickershield, it is designed to be usable by neutrals as well as psions. The flickershield requires a roll of the activating character's Psi + 2 from the Rank of the device. Once initiated, the flickershield increases the Difficulty of all attacks from beyond Close Range by 2. These devices are commonly assigned to Wawindaji operatives. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Medium, **Tolerance:** ••, **Cost:** •••

**Noetic Beacon:** Designed to function as emergency communications devices, a noetic beacon resembles a large egg the size of an adult human fist with a green, rough exterior. Capable of both wired and wireless OpNet capability, a noetic beacon is encrypted with advanced algorithms to protect any data contained on them.

When a Noetic Beacon is formatted by a teleporter, it sets the coordinates as desired by the user. Once a set of coordinates are locked in, the Beacon becomes unformatted.

Noetic beacons can be loaded with emergency data, including holographic messages. When needed, they can be activated, at which time they teleport to their programmed coordinates and attempt to sync with a paired computer network at the location. These beacons travel as though their effective Psi trait was one. For hacking purposes, noetic beacons have an Attitude of negative five.

As of 2123, all Upeo spacecraft are equipped with at least one beacon for emergencies, which defaults to returning to the vessel's home base (generally Ruan's World or Earth). **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** ••••, **Cost:** ••••

| TYPE | SIZE | HANDLING | SPEED | TAGS | WEAPONS | TECH | FT | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Karwe Class Light Cruiser | 4 | 1+ | [5] | Armor 1, Astrogation Systems 1, Cargo 1, Crew Required -3 Complex 0, Computer 0, Massive 1, Maneuverable 1, Psi -1, Noetic Systems 3 (Spatial Shielding), Thrusters 2, Weaponry 2 | Laser Carbine, Missile Launcher | Ψ | ••• | L |
| Nyangumi Class Colony Ship | 6 | -1+ | [3] | Armor 1, Astrogation Systems 1, Cargo 5, Complex 0, Computer 0, Crew Required -1, Massive 3, Psi -1, Repair Bots 1, Sluggish -1, | n/a | Ψ | ••• | L |

**Spatial Penetration Energy Enhancement Devices (SPEED):** These three enhancement bioapps were developed by the Upeo wa Macho to assist their rapid response capabilities. Consisting of a pair of bracers placed over the psion's wrists, they work to increase the speed at which a psion can teleport over vast distances. Members of Mwitu are often assigned these bioapps. To make the SPEED small enough to be worn and cheap enough to manufacture, there are three versions of this device, one for each teleportation Mode.

A psion attuned to a SPEED considers their Psi to be increased by 2 for the purposes of calculating teleportation time (or the construction of portals) using the Mode associated with the device. **Tech:** Ψ **Size:** Medium, **Tolerance:** ••, **Cost:** •••

**Spatial Sight Helmet:** Another device created for dealing with Chromatics, the Spatial Sight Helmet has uses beyond fighting photokinetic aliens. Appearing to be a leathery, full-face covering helmet, the Spatial Sight must be formatted to function. Once formatted and activated, it interfaces with the wearer on a psionic level and renders their optic nerves non-functional.

The wearer's sight is replaced fully with a three-dimensional visualization, created through spatial awareness. This removes any penalties for darkness and obscured vision just like the Spatial Sense power. These helmets are provided not just to combat personnel but also to the Mwitu for search and rescue and are sold to other organizations for search and rescue functions. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** ••, **Cost:** ••

**Teleportational Helm Mark II:** An advancement on the standardized Teleportational Helms deployed by the Upeo and other organizations, this model possesses all functionality of the base version (**Trinity Continuum: Æon p. 291**) with a significant upgrade. When a formatted teleporter uses this device to transport a vehicle, they can also commit the same amount of psi points to charge the spatial circuitry of the device with a pre-performed return teleport. Even if the teleporter later dies or is incapacitated, another psion with any Aptitude who is also formatted to this device can spend 4 psi points to activate this jump, allowing the ship to return home without its teleporter. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Large, **Tolerance:** ••••, **Cost:** •••••

## UPEO SPACECRAFT

The following two vessels were developed by Upeo wa Macho for their own use.

**Karwe-Class Exploratory Cruiser:** Designated a light cruiser, the *Karwe*-class is the shining jewel of the Upeo wa Macho fleet. Fast and heavily armed, the Karwe has the most advanced technology of

any ship that the order has designed. Alongside the sophisticated engines and sturdy space frame, numerous advanced bioapps are included in the design. Each *Karwe* class is equipped with a Mark II Teleportational Helm (see above). The most advanced aspect of the ship, however, is the massively upscaled version of the Flickershield system. When activated, the *Karwe* distorts space around the vessel, causing incoming threats to be teleported beyond the ship. When the shield is active, all attempts to attack the *Karwe*, including ramming or hostile boarders, increase by +3 Difficulty. The version of the *Karwe*-class sold to the Æon Trinity lack the Noetic Systems tag but increase Cargo to 2. They also do not include the Teleportational Helm Mark II, but only have a cost of •••••

**Nyangumi-Class Colony Ship:** Designed as a colony ship in concert with Qin scientists, the *Nyangumi* is the largest ship designed by the Upeo, rivaling the size of the Leviathan jump ships. As all Upeo wa Macho ships utilize Teleportational Helms rather than the massive Tesser drives, the cargo holds of the *Nyangumi* are larger than most other human craft. The *Nyangumi* (whale) is built to be deployed in one of two configurations. Within the massive holds of the *Mkulima* (farmer) variant up to 400,000 people can be seated in only modest discomfort. The *Shamba* (farm) configuration forgoes the passage of people to carry enough prefabricated structures, makers, fusion generators and Qin building seeds to establish a community able to support the 400,000 within the *Mkulima*.

To further differentiate it from other ships of such size, the Nyangumi is unarmed, slow, and relatively unarmored for a ship of such mass. These enormous vessels are never intended to be deployed as solo craft, operating in *Mkulima-Shamba* pairs with support from *Chui*-class frigates.

## New Vehicle Tag

The following new vehicle tag exists.

**Noetic System (2 or 3):** Vehicles carrying this tag can replicate the effects of a 1 or 2 dot psionic power, for 2 or 3 dots of tags, respectively. This power has a specific effect that is situationally more limited than a psion using their own powers, but effects generated by this tag are of the same Scale as their vehicle. Noetic Systems must be individually formatted to function, each with a Tolerance rating of •••.

# PSIONS UNITED FOR HUMANITY'S FUTURE!

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND expands the TRINITY CONTINUUM: ÆON setting by diving into the inner workings, goals, and attitudes of the psi orders. Headed by proxies with powerful visions of the future, the psi orders are united in ensuring humanity's prosperity but differ on the details.

Inside, you will find:

- Detailed information on all eight psi orders, including their structure, organization, politics, projects, and goals.
- An overview of the important people within the orders, their allies and enemies, how they relates to each other, and what threats each order must overcome.
- Guidance for running campaigns focusing on specific psi orders, how such stories interact with other organizations, and the challenges players will face.
- Deeper examination of psi powers, their potential and limitations, including flexible systems to allow players to generate their own spectacular effects!
- Rules and descriptions of new technologies used by each psi order.

*Requires both TRINITY CONTINUUM: ÆON and the TRINITY CONTINUUM COREBOOK to play.*

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